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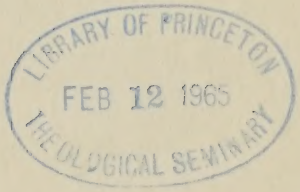

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CHURCH and METROPOLIS

A city planner's viewpoint of the slow-changing church in the fast-changing metropolis

Perry L. Norton

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Preface

For more than half a decade it has been my privilege to work with Protestant church leaders whose concerns and portfolios involve them in the problems of the metropolitan community. As a professional city planner my assignment has been to help them, and through them others, to interpret their role in the processes of rapid change and explosive growth taking place in the metropolis.

What follows here is a personal response to this experience. It includes all my biases and predispositions. It is my hope, however, that what is written will not be judged as an indictment. If the reader senses an undercurrent of disagreement with what the church has done so far, let it be read as my own wrestling with problems that we all share together, and as constructive criticism rather than provocation.

Issues in which a whole community is involved are—*must be*—the church's concern. And the parish, the suburban town, or the city neighborhood, is only

a part of the community. Unless we work with an urgency to create the mechanisms by which a person can participate in the processes which enable the whole community to grow in love, we will have destroyed ourselves as individuals and as a nation. A feeling which has sustained this writing is that there may be a desperate need for massive change in the institutional setup of the church to bring it to a more effective and dynamic witness to the metropolitan community.

Several pages could be filled with the names of people whose help and inspiration are worthy of acknowledgment, but such comprehensive recitation is unnecessary. There are some, however, who must be mentioned—absolved, of course, of any personal responsibility for the conclusions I have drawn.

First, the work of the Rev. Meryl Ruoss, whom I consider to be one of the prophets of these times, should alone be the subject of an entire book. Perhaps this one will partially serve that need. Also, while still in college I was led by the Rev. John Burt to realize that a man might serve his ministry without wearing a stiff, round collar.

Among the other church leaders currently wrestling meaningfully with the opportunities that change brings, and to whom I have looked for inspiration, I would mention: Joseph Merchant, Walter Kloetzli, Ross Hidy, Murray Hastings, Harold Kier, Gerald Gilmore, Donald Benedict, David Ramage, John Wagner, Jon Regier, Leslie Schultz, James Morton, Daniel

Corrigan, John Egan, Paul Moore, Almon R. Pepper, Orion Hopper—and so many others that the recollection of names leaves me dazed with memories.

From the work and writings of Muriel Webb, William Stringfellow, George W. Webber, Gibson Winter, Peter Berger, Bishop John Robinson, and others, I have drawn encouragement and confidence that it is appropriate and urgent to be exploring these matters, each according to his own insights and experience.

As to the sheer mechanics of getting this book actually written, it has been the cheerfully borne burden of my wife, Harriet, to hold down the decibel rating of assorted children and to keep the black coffee flowing freely.

PERRY L. NORTON

Church and Metropolis

Part I

Present Disorientation

The metropolis is the community of the twentieth century. While this is simple to state, it is not easy to grasp, for there is much confusion and disorientation with reference to it. We have only to read our newspapers to discover how widespread this disorientation is. Whether in the political, social, or community field we constantly come upon reports of actions taken that are oriented toward the past or that are self-defeating because there is no clear concept of what the metropolis is. With this the case, there is clearly a need for much public education and discussion.

In the pages that follow our particular concern will be with the church's problem in coping with and ministering to this new metropolitan community. There is a need to look closely at the important characteristics of metropolitan life in order to think creatively about the church's ministry to metropolitan society. And I would add that it is of crucial importance for the clergy to have clear ideas about this in order to

realize their potential for effective participation. I single out the clergy because despite their many positive qualities—particularly that they are not afraid to love and to hold firmly to a basic concern for people —I have frequently encountered among them a deep-seated disorientation about the essentials of metropolitan society.

We shall proceed here, then, by first considering the background out of which the metropolis has developed and some of the ideas and attitudes that have carried over from the past to create the present disorientation.

Our Agrarian Background I

Visualize, if you will, the American nineteenth century town of which Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* might serve as the archetype. It is the Good Old Time of front-porch sitting and ice cream socials. People nod pleasantly as they pass one another, strolling along the wooden sidewalks. Being close to the soil, they are close to God—because, as everyone knows, God made the country. For them all evil things are concentrated in the cities: fast women, men who drink something other than Pabst Blue Ribbon, money-changers, landlords, and the despotic rulers of manufacturing kingdoms.

In Our Town, on the contrary, the virtues are preserved. Here there is a sense of belonging. The family is a whole family with several generations living together, passing Eternal Truths on to one another —the oldsters made buoyant by the high spirits of the

young, and the young gaining wisdom and insight from their elders.

The American Church, like some other American institutions, continues to live in the nineteenth century, in the world of Our Town. It putts along as though the cities never really happened, as though the automobile never entirely replaced the horse, and as though the parish were still The Parish.

One can take a fast look at history and understand why so many Protestant churches are in this predicament. They grew up in agrarian America. The clergy were among the few educated people in the community. They were often teachers. They surely were *preachers,* and they spoke with effectiveness. They participated in causes; they led people. The leaders of the parish were often leaders of the community—and vice versa.

But, learned as it was, church leadership was not reading the signs of the times. It did not understand the challenges which were being offered by growth, expansion, and a nascent technology. When the urban areas began to grow, the church (along with many other institutions of society) did not understand that the very concept of community was changing.

The church's response to these changes took two forms, both of which reflected its agrarian community heritage. The first response was one affecting the size of the local parish organization. Parish churches and congregations had "always" been of a certain size, one

determined by the size of the town and the number of communicants with whom the minister could maintain a measure of personal relationship. As towns grew to cities, therefore, size became a problem. The church solved this problem by increasing the number of churches to keep pace with the urban growth, and then designated each new assemblage a parish or a congregation.

If there previously had been some real significance in the coterminous relationship between the community and the parish, it was immediately canceled out in the proliferation of parishes as a result of this tactic. The tactic fixed a special kind of kinship between church and place of residence. If in a cluster of houses there resided x number of people, the church could presume (statistically) to draw x number of persons. And in the eyes of the church this became the only relevant index of urban growth.

Of these residential neighborhoods or subcommunities the local minister would speak with great feeling when he had occasion to refer to the "community I serve." In a sense it became necessary for the clergyman to see this residential area as a "community" because of the historical relationship between parish and community. Thus it was that the church, by the very nature of its organization, fostered the subcommunity insularity which is today giving many church frontiersmen all kinds of catfits.

The second response which the church made was

to condemn the city outright as evil. The phrase is heard so often that I am sure somebody important in the history of the church must have said it aloud once: "God made the country; man made the city." It expresses an attitude which the church presumably does not any longer support. However, the fact that the statement continues to be cited (if only for purposes of denial) awakens the suspicion that it *is* the basic church response.

Certainly it is true that there are a great many church functionaries at the local, state, and regional levels who are prone to insist that "*we* are not urban." Recently I met with a group of clergymen of the same denomination from one of our western states. It was a conference dealing with the implications of urban culture for the mission of the church. There was a loud insistence that they were not urban. Factually, however, 75 per cent of their church membership, taken collectively, lived within census-defined metropolitan areas. It is interesting to note that 75 per cent of the churches themselves were *not* located within those metropolitan areas. This meant, of course, that the clergy were not 75 per cent metropolitan either.

Another phenomenon which ought to be noted here—and one probably related to this anti-urban attitude—is the inequitable distribution of clergy and church buildings. The cities actually grew so fast that it was not possible to establish congregations and to build churches at the rate needed in order to duplicate

the ideal small town parish model. For example: let us assume that, in some area which we might study over a period of years, there is a population of 5,000 and, say, four Protestant churches to start with. Let us also assume that these figures represent an acceptable balance between population and church facilities. Then the area should have had eight churches for a 10,000 population, and twelve churches when it reached 15,000. There is probably no place at all where a consistent ratio of expansion was maintained.

On the other hand, using the same kind of ratio sample and applying it to a rural town, we could probably find an instance in which a town of 10,000 with eight churches in 1900 might today have a population of 7,000 and *still* have those eight churches.

This is, of course, highly oversimplified. But some such form of analysis would, I think, help explain why the condition now obtains in which we have church buildings and ordained clergy who are not distributed in a way that reflects the present distribution of the population.

For the Protestant churches there has been another important complication. Urban growth from the middle of the nineteenth century to early in the twentieth involved very largely people from European countries who were predominantly Roman Catholic. The cities were not, therefore, exceptionally "high potential" for Protestant evangelism, and many of the churches fled to the suburbs. Subsequently—and

fairly recently—when the earlier waves of immigrants were gradually absorbed into the whole metropolitan fabric and moved out of the core city concentrations, their place in the core city was taken by Negroes and Puerto Ricans. These latter are subjects of concern for the Protestant churches, but the churches now either are without bases in the city or have become so firmly suburban-white-Anglo-Saxon oriented that they have little common ground for effective communication with these newcomers, most of whom, ironically enough, are genuinely rural in their orientation.

From the very beginning, therefore, the city has been a vast and annoying mystery to our Protestant churches. And the matter is compounded by another fact which has absolutely nothing to do with geography. We have been using the words "urban" and "city" somewhat interchangeably. This is not an accurate use of the words. "Urban" today is an adjective applicable to the nature of our whole culture, and not just to the cities. It describes our times, in which even farming is *big* business. It describes a society which is characterized by groups and associations, rather than one in which the individual functions as an autonomous maker of decisions. But while men have been organizing to resolve their concerns and work out their frustrations through *re*-personalization in the new systems of group association, the church has been psychologically stuck on the tensions attending the transition. This in part explains why in a recent survey

of young people more than 75 per cent of those interviewed indicated that they probably would not bother to consult a clergyman about their problems.

As I see it, the church seems to lack a concept of man that is adequate to the full complexity of our civilization. Trapped with an image of man as fundamentally agrarian and indoctrinating its clergy with a view of man's social nature that is based on small-scale society, the church now finds itself without a leadership that can grasp quickly and speak effectively to the new mass society and its problems.

Metropolis: The New Development 2

Until the middle of the nineteenth century there were no cities in the United States with a population of more than a million. In fact, there were only six which had a population in excess of 100,000; and they accounted for only 15 per cent of the total national population. In other words, 85 per cent of the population still lived on farms or in small villages whose economy was based primarily on the extractive industries: fishing, farming, and mining. We have picked the year 1850 as a convenient, though not necessarily precise, turning point.

Now previous to that day, as in the centuries before it, a man's living habits in the sight of his family and friends were almost predictable. Frequently his station in life was decreed from birth. Should he become a blacksmith, then his entire set of responsibilities and performances was understood by the whole

community. If he was a farmer, again his duties and daily comings and goings were understood and rigidly adhered to. Deviation was foolhardy, for it was immediately seen as related, whether accurately or not, to motives not accepted as part of the mores of the society. It was the era of the so-called "established community." Face-to-face contacts were meaningful; there were relatively few strangers, or strange ideas, with which to contend.

But in the middle of the nineteenth century the momentum of a revolution began building. We call it the Industrial Revolution. We note especially the changes in our economy induced by such developments as the McCormick reaper, the cotton gin, Goodyear's vulcanizing process, Morse's telegraph, Edison's phonograph, Joseph Henry's electric motor and transformer, Eastman's photographic experimentations, and the like. These technological developments came at a period of cataclysmic coincidence for the nation because simultaneously with them came the great migratory movements from the Old World, which more than tripled the population between 1850 and 1900.

Then began the growth of the great cities. By 1900 urban centers accounted for 40 per cent of the total population—as contrasted with the 15 per cent just fifty years earlier. And in 1900, while all urban centers accounted for 40 per cent of the total population, the areas now defined as *standard metropolitan statistical areas* accounted for 30 per cent of the total.

In other words, only 10 per cent of all urban dwellers lived in non-metropolitan places. Between 1900 and 1950, the metropolitan areas of this country absorbed 73 per cent of the total population growth; and between 1950 and 1955 these same areas absorbed 97 per cent of the population growth of the entire country. Today, three-fourths or more (the statistics are difficult to keep up with) of our total population live in metropolitan areas.

For reference purposes, it is useful to keep in mind that the word "metropolitan" has more than one meaning. When we speak of the metropolis or of metropolitan man we most generally use such words in a broad cultural sense. There is, in addition, a technical meaning which is prescribed by the United States Bureau of the Census. The definition is complex; but it can be summarized by noting that it builds upon an urban center of 50,000 inhabitants or more, and includes contiguous counties which have a density of at least 150 persons per square mile.

Over and beyond the statistics, however, is the fact that this fantastic urban growth rapidly outruns political boundaries and greatly reduces our capacity to communicate at what we are (still) inclined to call the "grass roots" level. Urbanites as citizens are bewildered by their seeming inability to express themselves effectively in the public sector.

We are constantly forming committees or associations to try to come to grips with the social issues that are rapidly becoming a part of the American vernacu-

lar. No one part of the community knows an individual as a whole person. Where he lives, a person may be judged by the trim of his hedge or his skills at a basement workbench. On his job, he is accepted by different measures of performance. What this says to the church is that our *Christian responsibilities* are no longer subject to the scrutiny of a community which sees the individual as a whole person.

By aligning itself to this no longer self-contained community, the historic church began to forfeit much of its critical and involved role in the life of its members many generations ago. Through the centuries, through long experience with living in such communities, it built up a whole system of manners and reflexes which constituted the applied beliefs of the people of those communities. These beliefs were, of course, religiously grounded. But it was the community itself which, through mores and customs, functioned as the curator of this system. Its continuance in this role depended not only upon the grounding in religion but also upon the direct and interpersonal contacts which made up the communications network of the community.

But now, with the old network gone forever, we are left without a recognizable community in the old terms. Cultural memory, however, is there to be contended with. Sensing the loss, society has reacted by trying to recreate the *form* of the old community—with the expectation that if it could somehow accomplish this, it would also recapture the stability, the

sense of belonging, the identity, and all the other things that are missing in the anomalous conditions of the present. Thus it is that we have our suburban towns coyly pretending autonomy. Thus it is that we have "neighborhoods" in the more densely populated central areas. And thus it is, also, that the more we indulge in this pretense of autonomy, the less we have to be autonomous about.

In the urban region, for example, we have had to solve certain kinds of problems, such as highway needs and underground utilities, by creating ad hoc authorities that are independent of the existing political structure. Being independent means that they are not under the immediate purview of any clearly designated public forum (town meeting or state legislature). Yet what these authorities do, or do not do, has a tremendous effect upon the development of the physical living environment. And they spend a great deal of money doing or not doing it.

As a people we are never more irresponsible than when we stand in the halls of our little enclaves and protest that we are very much for the building of a new highway—as long as it misses our town and goes through the next one. We could take almost any function of society and subject it to the same disparaging observation: housing, education, health and welfare, the distribution of retail outlets. Examine any facet of metropolitan life, and we can see that we suffer from a lack of effectual public responsibility for it.

Generally church people will protest that this is

the way things are. So it is, but the question here is whether this is what we want. Are we content to have our powerhouse people—those with highly responsible positions in industry, for example—limited in the exercise of their capacities to the extent that they might spend weeks embroiled in an argument in their suburban town over a six-room addition to the local high school, while the whole high school system of the central city is reduced to an expensive baby-sitting operation? Are we content to let our suburbs be of one single economic class, ditto-domiciled in thirty-thousand-dollar split-level ranches? Are we content to see the desperately needed urban redevelopment of the older central city continue to shift those of low income from one slum to another?

This metropolis is our community. Most of the iniquities which help to describe it (and there are many) have their points of beginning within the metropolitan community. The leading question is: Will we accept a responsibility for this community, or will we continue to deny that it exists and pursue our present course of privatizing the whole culture for the benefit of those who can afford (or who are allowed to afford) the pertaining privileges?

Already in the eastern seaboard cities there is a mounting interest in private schools. It is true that there have always been private schools, that they existed before the public school system came into being. But now, in the cities, the system of public schools which has been such a demonstrable strength

for us as a nation is being threatened by those who are saying, in effect, "I will continue to pay my taxes for public schools, because that is the law. But I will harass the process every chance I get, because I have decided that the public schools are not good enough for my children and am now sending them to private establishments."

What happens to those who cannot afford this luxury? Their children come under the tutelage of people who sometimes are just barely qualified to teach. They spend the day in condemned buildings. They drop out from sheer boredom, and become idle and cynical.

Things of this kind undermine democratic government and deny the fact of our interdependence. Sooner or later the problems spill over, and show that the groups which have sectioned themselves off are not protected and immune. Society is derelict in its duty to itself as well as to the individuals who are being deprived. And the church, if it has any commitments to society, ought to be pointing this out.

These are the issues. Everything that is written here is predicated upon the central theme that the suburban town or city neighborhood is no more than a *part* of the community, and that unless we work with urgency to create the mechanisms by which a person *can* participate in the processes by which that larger community grows in love, we will have destroyed ourselves as individuals and as a nation.

Disengagement of the Churches from Decision-making 3

Recently I heard someone describe ministers as "passive receptors." And by this he seemed to mean that they tend to be people who *let* things happen rather than people who *make* things happen. The phrase "passive receptor" may or may not be an accurate one, but I find it useful in looking back over my experiences.

For one thing, it would explain why ministers understand better the needs of people to whom things *have happened* than they do the needs of people who are *making things happen.* There may be good historical reasons for this. In an agrarian society decisions are simple, and the results fairly immediate and obvious. They are, in fact, so simple and so obvious that they require no special attention on the part of the church, with the result that both the church and the clergy have tended, through the years, to become disengaged from decision-making processes.

With the arrival of an age of massive urbanization, the things which began to *happen* to people were urgent and poignant. They commanded the anxious attention of some parts of the church. At the same time the church either accepted without question these events as inevitable or saw what was happening simply in terms of robber barons, preying landlords, and so forth. In any case it missed, along with a good part of society, the dynamics of change which were involved.

There were people in need, to be sure. There were the disinherited and the disabled; the lonely and the frightened; the victimized and the helpless. The point is that the church saw only these and did not, in any way, undertake to influence the decisions which brought this situation about. This blindness to social change at the decision level persisted long enough to entrench firmly a mind-set, and the processes by which men select, or are selected, to enter into the ministry also contributed. The net result has been an inability to recognize the face of anxiety unless it is manifest in some familiar category of a clear and present deprivation.

The affluent person is not an obviously deprived person. He may, of course, be deprived of many important things in life; but unless he chooses to reveal it, this anxiety can easily remain submerged, invisible to the individuals whom he meets. This has been the fate of the decision-maker.

Now, a distinction should be made among deci-

sion-makers. First, there are those whose work decisions will not, in fact, have a significant effect upon the lives of people—at least not in terms of the numbers affected. Second, there is the man whose work decisions will affect people in the long run; but if he ponders about this, he will insist that "other things are changing too," and will ask, "How can I know whether it is *my* decision or someone else's which is really affecting people?" The third type includes the man who perceives quite clearly that his work decisions will affect people—and that very soon and drastically.

This third type deserves serious consideration. Many individuals in this category truly agonize over the implications of the decisions they are called upon to make. Often they find themselves caught between the pragmatics of job survival and the "oughtness" of things as they understand them. The pragmatics are obvious and persuasive. The oughtness is less clear and depends entirely upon the individual.

Let us take the example of a man who holds a top technical position in the urban renewal agency of one of our larger cities. Recently, under his direction, the professional staff of the agency prepared an urban renewal plan for a large portion of the inner city. The plan was designed to hold at an absolute minimum the number of buildings to be demolished and, therefore, the number of tenants to be relocated. The political situation of the moment is such, however, that the mayor and his administration need some proj-

ect to which they can point that will be highly dramatic and highly visible. They, therefore, want a plan which will clear many blocks of existing residential land and entice the participation of private redevelopment interests. And since the final form of the plan rests pretty much with these city officials, it appears as though massive clearance will be the choice made.

What should our friend do in this case? Should he resign in protest? Should he give aid and support to the political "outs" by providing them with technically supportive arguments? Or should he ride out the storm, hoping that the next time around he can get through a sounder and more popularly beneficial plan?

If anyone thinks that the protagonist of this little drama is *principally* concerned about his own job security, then he is missing an important dynamic aspect of contemporary professional work. Our friend really *is* less concerned for his personal security than he is for the oughtness, or the rightness, of the decision he has to make.

This is a major point for us to keep in mind. There are people who regularly put their jobs on the line. They walk constantly in that twilight tension. And be sure of this, they suffer the consequences in a society that places a premium on conformity and on being a "good company man." Yet these people will bravely wrestle with values—the values and meaning of their own lives and of the decisions they are called

upon to make. When you talk with them, you have to understand that they are not primarily concerned with their own personal job security nor with the "things" (however these may be described) which are happening to them personally. The questions they will ask of those who listen will more likely be something like this:

> "Don't people see what is happening?"
> "Won't people look behind the obvious?"
> "What are the long-range consequences of this thing?"

They are concerned with the things that are happening —the decisions being made now which are going to influence the lives of people in the future. I do not think the clergy are adequately prepared to enter into fruitful dialogue with these people. Consider the situation of our friend in the urban renewal administration —and then imagine an encounter between him and many a parish minister. Would the full complexity of his situation be adequately comprehended?

Within quite a different context we have the same sort of problem in the very life of the institutional church itself. The church is much more inclined to "adjust" than it is to "guide." If, for example, the inner city has become the habitation of disenfranchised minority groups, the church is mostly concerned with adjusting to meet this change. We read of the need for clergy who can speak Spanish, in order to bring

a ministry to the Puerto Ricans. We read that we need men who can understand the "spiritual needs" of the high school drop-out. And I am sure we do. *But,* simultaneously and more urgently, we need men who understand the processes and circumstances of our society which produce the conditions that make the problems.

It is not a basic law of nature—an immutable "given" from the Lord on high—that there be slums. It is not a basic *law* that Negroes be the last hired and the first fired. These circumstances exist because of the attitudes of people and of their misunderstanding of what it means to be responsible in this society and in these times.

The Autonomy of Churches Today 4

At a meeting of some national-level church executives from various Protestant denominations, we began to talk about deploying clergy on a regional or metropolitan basis, in order to provide some task forces for meeting tough and urgent problems. One leader said something to the effect that "his people" would not be very interested. "After all," he explained, "we are a highly autonomous church."

This remark precipitated an hour or so of good-natured banter about the relative autonomy within the various denominations represented. As it turned out, the men were all insisting that the most consistent bedrock they encountered as they mined the field of genuine change was that of the autonomous *power* of the local congregation.

In the typical Protestant denomination it is the local congregation which supplies the financial where-

withal to support regional and national operations. These local bodies name delegates to the general conventions—which are the major law-making assemblies. Each of these little local societies is an economic unit unto itself.

Two types of problems emerge from this situation. The first relates to the local congregation which lives for itself. In this case it becomes, sadly enough, a kind of haven or club to which people will pay dues as long as it continues to give them what they want. And what most of them want is an isolated confraternity which will say the "right" things (depending upon the particular persuasion of the community) and make relatively few demands for personal sacrifice. As individuals they retain the right to quit whenever something displeases them, such as the way the Sunday school is run, what the minister says in a sermon, or the compositions selected by the choir director.

All of this puts pressure upon the clergyman to be "an OK guy." He must conform; he must be a good mixer, a fine handshaker; he must be pleasant at all times (and so must his wife). If membership in the local church should fall off, and if there is no clearly evident demographic characteristic which accounts for the loss, he is personally held responsible.

The second type of problem arises out of our population mobility as it affects the local church. Since each local church will have a fairly fixed set of financial obligations for salaries, property mainte-

nance, and debt, keeping the membership up to an optimum level can become its principal business. Those who move out of the neighborhood must be continuously replaced. The local minister does not have to bear this burden alone. All the organizational subdivisions of the church are engaged in attracting the newcomers, and at the same time holding the old-timers who are not moving.

There seems to be a well-entrenched mind-set which says that to attract people you must amuse and entertain them. Through the years, too many church-people, both clerical and lay, have come to think about the church primarily in terms of the "gathering together." The "going out to witness" has been soft-pedaled or ignored. From this it is an easy next step to think that fellowship in Christ means simply "fellowship"—in other words, a plethora of clubs which often compete, unsuccessfully for the most part, with service institutions.

What happens next is that those members who have a sincere concern for society and are sensitive to their responsibilities in this respect seek out other instrumentalities through which to participate in the investigation and resolution of their concerns. If they retain a church membership at all, it is perfunctory. They know that man is not an autonomous being—not an island unto himself. They know also that no group assembled on the basis of residential coincidence can in reality be an autonomous unit. Unfortunately,

there is no other level to which a man can relate within the life of the church and still be accepted as an authentic member. He *must* be a member of the local church first. He must support it financially, attend services regularly, and be genially available for participation in various projects.

We have been talking here principally about the local churches which make of their autonomy something of an article of faith. There are, however, many other local congregations which have been forced by circumstances to abandon this notion. For example, there are churches in slum areas which are not able to "replace" members who have moved chiefly because the newcomers are likely to be Negro or Puerto Rican. These places, if the doors are to be kept open, must then count on financial aid from the regional body. They become "missions." This phrase "missions" means aid-receiving. Within the church there is some unhappiness about this meaning, but not much is being done to change it.

Frequently, the minister of one of these missions has to struggle just to keep the physical plant from falling apart. I talked with one such pastor not long ago who said that the only reason his church building had not fallen down was that the termites were holding hands. Moreover, because the mission is in a second-class category the sacrifice made by men willing to undertake this difficult task of re-establishing the church is not even acknowledged.

This is the grim picture which "church autonomy" presents. Yet this autonomy is so closely guarded and protected that it is virtually impossible for the church to provide any leadership which can effectively span both the core city and the exurban fringes. And we have no choice but to conclude that it is based upon the fiction of the "independent" community and maintained in the teeth of the fact that the first characteristic of contemporary society is *interdependency*.

One final question, and we shall be done with this theme. Can we say that our concern for the inner or core city is serious when at the same time we allow a situation to prevail—this second-class mission situation—which so often precludes the church from using the best available talents?

Part II

Images in the Mirror

If we want to see what we look like, physically at least, we look in a mirror. We can tell at once whether our hair needs combing or whether our tie knot doesn't quite cover the collar button. If an adjustment is necessary, it is quickly made. Some of the things we see, however, like wrinkles and gray hair, are not so readily adjusted or changed. In fact, in the face of such realities as these, we begin to raise the very serious question as to whether they even should be changed. And, raising the issue of "oughtness" recalls to us that we look, in our lifetime, into many mirrors.

We also see ourselves in other ways. We have a mirror of success against which we assess our accomplishments and acquisitions against those of our peer group (usually a shifting group of people just a trifle richer and a trifle smarter than we are). We have a mirror of behavior—usually kept in a dark corner in the back hall of our meandering conscious thought. Such a mirror is consulted when we discover that

someone whose behavior patterns we had thought were akin to ours has been taken to task by society. (He has, in other words, been caught.) And, of course, there are mirrors of conformity, of wholesome family relationships—all mostly subtle variations of the mirrors of success and behavior.

Since most of us extend our individual personalities through group associations of infinite variety, we also have corporate mirrors. These are of two major kinds. First, there is the mirror that reflects success according to the dictates and expectations of the organization. Such a mirror is much used and of long standing. More recently, in the development of a corporate society, we have seen a growing use of the behavior mirror in which we seek to identify our corporate "image" within the context of the larger society.

In this section we are going to look into the corporate mirror of the metropolis in order to see whether our church concepts, both of the metropolite as a man and of the metropolis as a corporate entity, tally with the realities.

A Look into the Social Mirror 5

In various cities I have helped in the preparation and conduct of conferences designed to help those attending get a fresh look at the society in which they worked. Most of the participants in these conferences were clergymen. Sometimes they were assembled because they were pastors of local churches; at other times they were brought together because they filled nonparochial roles. In all cases the conferences revolved about this central point: that technically, economically, and to a large measure socially, there was a community composed of people and groups living in a state of high interdependence. Concurrently, however, we made the observation that the political and religious community was in a state of confusion, mostly because of its archaic structure.

In one series of conferences, in order to create the environment for the examination of this central

point, we constructed a mythical metropolis called *Metabagdad*. To describe this metropolis, we prepared a series of maps showing such things as the major highway and street patterns, and the location of major land uses: housing, industry, commerce, and social institutions. And to make the situation a "live" one, we wrote or assembled newspaper articles describing more than a dozen current issues.

Typically enough, Metabagdad was not a political unity. A river, which was a state boundary, flowed through the middle of it. Not only did the metropolis span parts of two states; it was made up of several cities and towns, located within several counties. But the problems described were clearly of a sort that could not be solved in toto by any one of the political units functioning unilaterally. Even to *think* about them logically required a perspective of the whole community—the metropolis.

In other words, we attempted to create a mirror into which people might look in order to see what a community really is. Since the conference participants were mostly clergymen, we spent some time describing the position of the church in the community and its relation to it. We described local parishes, caught up by their localized parochial concerns. And a monumental problem was imposed by the fact that the area of Metabagdad covered several dioceses, districts, and conferences. This meant that there was virtually no pattern of communication across the river.

Three types of reaction to Metabagdad emerged, despite the fact that all accepted the presentation as factually accurate. Some participants looked directly and unflinchingly into the mirror, and it proved to be a staggering experience. Many of these declared, with considerable feeling, that their ministry could never be the same again. Others, who made up the second type, hastily retreated from the image, frightened almost; for them the problem was too big and too complex to comprehend. Still others, the third type, rejected the mirror entirely—even belligerently. "Let the church be the church," they said. (I must confess that I never quite know how to interpret this statement. Perhaps it reflects a sort of pietism, a folk religion that is more a cult of reassurance than it is a commitment to Christ.)

It was at this point that effective communication in the conferences generally came to a standstill. The differences in reaction were both basic and personal; so much so, in fact, that it was exceedingly difficult for the participants to share mutually the experience they were having.

Where the attitude was one of retreat, what we were bumping against was probably the principle of local autonomy and all that that principle involves—a matter that we have already discussed. In the light of local autonomy and independence the whole idea of the metropolis as a unity looked impractical, one which would be extraordinarily difficult to present to

a congregation since it would involve changing the whole pattern of their thought, as well as introducing new patterns of operation. In the eyes of these men the problem of coping with the local congregation is so central and gigantic that they find it next to impossible to focus on the metropolis, let alone to comprehend it. Fear and insecurity are playing a large role here.

The flat and belligerent rejection is a little more difficult for me to comprehend. It is conceivable that for some of the participants our efforts to describe the new and larger community carried the implication of political action. Actually, this was not the nature of the conferences. Our purposes were quite simply to provide the *opportunity* for viewing a new concept of community. It was felt that if the leadership of the church could grasp these new dimensions it would follow that there would be a significant change in the nature of the whole system of communication between the leadership and the membership of the church.

The goal of these conferences and the intent of the presentations was to promote an understanding of reality rather than to push for specific political action programs. But we may not have made the point sufficiently clear—especially for those whose thought processes tend to tie together question-asking with action-taking, allowing for relatively little intermediary deliberation.

Yet there were other conference participants who,

as previously indicated, responded most positively. They said that their ministry could never be the same, but they did not say this in protest. Rather, it was as though a great burden had been lifted from them and they were free, at last, to work in the areas that their instincts told them were the appropriate ones for this day and age.

They were most eager to get back to their own bailiwicks, to look anew at the community, to engage in new conversations with their fellow clergy and with the laymen with whom they most frequently came into encounter. They wanted to (and did) set up their own "Metabagdads," using real live issues rather than the theoretical ones upon which the original conference series was built.

It is not our contention here that ministers and other professional churchmen are more prone than other segments of society to look at society and its problems with blinders which obstruct their peripheral vision. Certainly the same problem obtains in the city planning profession. The city planners, too, can limit their vision to certain modes of behavior and response; and, when someone like Jane Jacobs[1] comes along to give them a jolt, they react angrily that she is talking about ten other people—not them!

This need to look outside and beyond our own purview—our *normal* purview—is probably one of the

[1] Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1963), 470 pp.

most difficult things that confronts any group, particularly one of specialists. (I personally dread being asked by some laymen, after my profession has been identified, "Oh, and what city have *you* planned lately?" Usually I call upon my wife to answer the question and, while I do not exactly know how she does it, the questioner most often is satisfied that I do have a right to exist.) It is for this reason that I require my students to read and review, in writing, the newspaper accounts of the various things happening to change the shape and content of the physical living environment. I do this because only thus can the city planner be attuned to the real impact of his work.

This need to look beyond relates especially to the conferences we are discussing. We can apply it by asking these questions: How, in fact, shall churchpeople make an evaluation as to whether or not their presence makes any difference? Is this a better society because Christians are here and working at it? What, in fact, does a "better society" mean?

In this connection there seems to be implicit in the thinking of many churchpeople a certain dichotomy. The prophets of the Old Testament had a Messianic concept of the good society as something achievable in history. When, in the Renaissance, this came into confluence with the Greek faith in science and reason, notable thinkers projected the idea of Utopia, an idea that persisted well into the nineteenth century;

and that idea in a distorted form is still present, in my opinion, in the thinking of many people today.

To be sure, much Christian thinking concerning the good society (i.e., Utopia) is transhistorical and eschatological in nature. This poses for many laymen, including myself, a real problem. What, in fact, are we supposed to conclude when we read (with monotonous repetition) of graft, corruption and cheating, and lying? What *shall* we conclude when Michael Harrington so devastatingly exposes the existence of the "other America"? That this is simply another manifestation of "sinful man" and let it go at that? I have had clergymen tell me (in an effort to be reassuring, I am sure) that man is intrinsically sinful and that I should not, therefore, be unduly distressed at the inequities that derive from this sinfulness. But I *am* distressed. And, as I look into this social mirror, it occurs to me that there are others who are also perturbed that their formal religious experience does not speak very precisely to the conditions with which they, as whole persons, must somehow come to grips.

Let us, then, examine next some of the broad social patterns of our environment, and after that take a careful look at the man who stands in the midst of metropolitan society—the metropolite.

Patterns of the Physical Environment 6

To a considerable extent what we see and hear and smell about us—the buildings, the streets, the noise, the odor of a soap factory—are nothing more than the outward, visible signs of whatever may be the present condition of our inward and spiritual grace. We cannot entirely ignore, however, the accompanying and apparently contradictory idea that man is shaped by his environment—even his urban environment.

We have already viewed the change from a village culture to an urban one, and we have identified the present-day metropolis as being the principal locus for "community" in these times. We have not, however, talked very much about the core of the metropolis. And we have not even mentioned the parts between the core and the suburb (or exurb, if you prefer), which are called by some writers the "gray areas."

The point has been made that since the whole metropolis is the community, no one part of it—that is to say, no one city or town within the metropolis—can properly be identified as a "community." As a statement this will hold up only if we are willing to accept a definition of community as the area which includes all the routine, regularized work and all the leisure-time and play activities. With such a definition in mind we pointed out earlier that the suburban town, despite pretensions that it is a reincarnation of the "old home town," essentially is no more than a home place which people go outside of for most of their activities. We must not make the assumption, however, that all suburbanites trek to the center city on their journey to work. This assumption, like a whole host of others we tend to make about the core city, must be re-examined if we are to understand the physical patterns of the metropolitan community. Let me make a few contentions here, accompanied by a modicum of support.

(1) The core city is no longer the focal point of manufacturing employment in the metropolis.

In the early days of city growth, power sources were concentrated. Not much was known about storing, transmitting, and transforming electricity. Now it can be tapped on to almost anywhere in an urban region. While great quantities of water are still used in many industrial processes, we have learned how to use and re-use it more efficiently. Where once the

fixed steel lines of the railroad served as the main means of freight transportation, raw and finished materials can now be hauled throughout the metropolis on rubber tires. And where the highways once were built on the radial concept of a core-hinterland relationship, now the interstices are filled and connected by high-speed circumferentials. The trend toward horizontal processing and the need for employee parking facilities have not benefited the core city. Plants have moved out. Many major manufacturing companies have not only spread themselves out over several different plant locations in one metropolis; they have decentralized across the whole country. This atomization is almost the rule—a rule which has the proving exceptions. And the instruments for continuing the trend, such as heavy-duty hovercraft, are already in the making.

Of course, not all employment is involved with manufacturing in the specific technical sense of the actual process of changing or transforming materials. The sales, management, and distribution activities, the financing of these enterprises, the buying and selling of stocks and whole corporations, the mergers and all the rest, along with the wide variety of personal services—especially security planning and education—still tend to be centered in the core city.

(2) The core city is no longer the focus for the retailing of goods.

The advent of the regional shopping center—a totally post-World War II phenomenon—was almost

in one fell swoop the death knell of the downtown department store. This was not an isolated event. Vast changes in retailing that were already underway were bound, eventually, to affect the position of the market place. Such retailing changes included improved canning and packaging of foods; refrigeration; brand standardization; the tightening up of regulations affecting the manufacturing and processing of food; mass-media advertising; the urbanization of the mail order houses, and so forth.

These and other factors have all but eliminated the retailing function of the market place. Most shoppers today are not "shopping"—they are looking for something specific, and are propelled directly to the place where it can be obtained. They already know what it is that they want and approximately how much they intend to pay for it. Sales persons in stores are hardly that at all. In department stores they are directors of traffic. In supermarkets they stand behind the cash registers checking people out.

I expect that most stores, as we have known them, will ultimately disappear. In their place will come increased shopping by telephone, by mail, and through a new breed of service person who might go by the title of Personal Purchasing Representative.

(3) The core city is no longer the focus of communications.

With radio, television, telephone, and the automatic processing of all kinds of data, man no longer

needs to engage in extensive face-to-face encounters in order to communicate. The fascinating thing in this respect is how far our habits lag behind the technical processes already available to us.

There are some treasurers of church organizations at the national level who would throw a fit at a conference telephone bill for, say, two hundred dollars. But they would not blink an eye when air travel and hotel vouchers come in for more than twice that amount. Yet the telephone conference may actually have involved more people, and may have covered more hours of actual conferring, than a personal gathering would have at some "central" place.

In time we should learn these things. And when we do, we shall see the core city's role as the center of communication very nearly washed out. This is even more apparent when we consider the ever increasing possibilities of closed-circuit TV and the inevitable "phono-vision" instrument, which will engage people both visually and audially.

(4) The core city is no longer the focus of cultural activities.

Consider how many people across the country have been exposed to Leonard Bernstein and the Lincoln Center. The proposal of Group W–Westinghouse TV to present opening night plays will produce more "first-nighters" in one season than have existed since the beginning of Broadway. Local playhouses and community orchestras and choral groups are showing

the effects of the increased availability of good training, professional coaching, and imported artists.

It is a matter of record that Broadway is declining. The maintenance of our cities' truly fine symphony orchestras may already depend heavily on sales of records and international tours. But whether we are talking about music, drama, fine arts, or the dance, the core city *as a geographical place* is not the magnet it once was—and it is becoming ever less so.

By phrasing these contentions with the word "focus," my purpose has been to dramatize the fact that the whole meaning of centrality has changed. The focus of a metropolitan area has nothing at all to do with *place* any more. Painters, for example, working within a metropolis and seeking recognition for their work may have in mind a particular series of exhibit centers where they try to have their work shown. Some of these may be in the central city, but some are just as likely to be in suburban places as well.

The core city may be the place where a certain kind of employment dominates, but not *all* employment. Certain highly specialized kinds of retail goods may still be available only in the core city; but the specialization is becoming so intensified that it makes as much sense for the seller to go to the consumer as it does for the process to work the other way around.

Whatever will be the development of our urbanity, it does not rest exclusively on the central city.

We must rather look to the functioning parts of the metropolis themselves, without preconceived notions as to the intrametropolitan place. We must recognize that the mobility of ideas and people is such that they are both highly transportable.

In a sense what is said here about the central city reflects the same concept that was applied to the suburban town. It has certain functions; it provides for certain needs. But it does not provide for all the needs of all the residents. It may have some aspect that is unique to the metropolis, or even to the nation. It may have an employment center that draws a labor force from the whole metropolitan region. It may provide one particular art form in an integrated cultural system. It may provide some leadership, shared with other communities, in the development of new techniques in some phase of education.

But each of these is a part of the whole, and so is the central city. This is why we must look long and carefully at some of the prevalent romantic notions about the core city. One such notion is the so-called "return to the city." Another speaks of the city as the "focus of decision-making." Both of these arise from the idea that the city, meaning the core city, is an isolable thing. This makes no more sense than to insist that the suburban town is a "thing" unto itself. If one looks upon the city as a thing apart, one may indeed observe that, contrary to such notions, there has been through the past decades an exodus of "leadership types." And it may be no more than another romantic notion

to look with hope upon the minute amount of construction of luxury high-rise apartment buildings as evidence that the "leaders" are moving back.

Some writers are caught up in such illusions. They have intrigued a substantial number of church people, who look upon the "return to the city" as a return of some of "our kind of people." They somehow feel that such a return will magically resuscitate inner city congregations. And the idea of an advent of "decision-makers" has entranced many a minister of a prestigious central city church.

The evil here is our failure to understand the meaning of community. And it is amply augmented by our tendency to shy away from any prognostication which might call us to a different and more severe responsibility for the present in which we exist. What we did yesterday produced what we have today, and what we do today will produce what we shall have tomorrow.

We need to spend time thinking about the physical changes in our environment, and the patterns evolving from them. We need to think about the fast developing mobile residential unit, which will diminish the dependency upon fixed utility lines and power sources. We need to think of the air car or personalized air travel, not as an interesting novelty, but as a technological inevitability. We need to catch up with the obsolescence of the suburban town. We need to ponder all these things.

The Metropolite: Man of the New Age 7

Who is this man of the new age, the metropolite? What are his characteristic features? Until the church examines this man's features, it cannot be sure its mission has meaning for him or, indeed, just what is to be its mission to him, in terms of emphasis.

The metropolite is the social product of urbanization and technological society. It is not our function here to attempt anything like a full sociological description, but we must note his most salient characteristic—namely, that he is a highly specialized man and that his life consists very much in playing a series of roles. He has been encouraged in this by the fact that his society has placed a high premium on specialization and that role-playing is perhaps the most economic way he has found of meeting the demands, stresses, and tensions of his society.

In a number of instances the goals that he con-

fronts in his roles are or seem contradictory and mutually cancelling. In these cases he is frequently at a loss to decide what is the unifying principle of his life; in other instances he has been unable to come to grips psychologically with his new mobility. The plight of such a man has received much attention from social analysts and artists with the result that the key words used to describe him have circulated as the very characteristics of the era: restless, rootless, lonely, anonymous, anxious, rushed, atomized.

Let it be noted here, however, that these problems have not been universal. True, some people have been disoriented by the rapid cultural shift that technological society has brought about. Some have come crashing down, but not all have been slipping even most of the time. A good many keep quite busy playing out their roles. With these people it is not a case of blind activism or utter depression. Even as they perform, they possess some capacity to stand outside themselves and see what is going on. When they do, they confront the meaning of their lives. The difficulty is that there are not very many clergy able to assist them effectively in this confrontation, because most ministers do not have the knowledge needed of the kind of roles that an individual is called upon to fill. The clergy in general have concentrated upon those individuals to whom something has happened, those who are victims of the rapid cultural shift. On the other hand, the minister of the suburban church, for

example, meets his male parishioner who is not a victim of this change only at the edges of his mate-father roles. The man's other roles usually are a vast mystery.

Now despite the fact that a man fills many roles —as many as there are groups in which he functions —to himself this man is only one person. And if he possesses stability (a relative term at best), each role is validated by some set of criteria, and the set of roles as a whole achieves reconciliation in his person. By "reconciliation" here it is meant that, within a system of circumstances, the roles are rationalized in relation to one another. Thus, for example, it poses no immediate problem for an educator employed by a state board of education and caught up in the sad problem of low levels of education in the central cities of his state to insist, in his suburb, on the very best for "his" schools and his children.

We say that it poses no *immediate* problem; but this is not to say that it poses no conflict. This it does. And now we find another dimension to the nature of the new metropolite which is not often understood. Increasingly as his business, trade, and professional associations reach out to span the larger community, the metropolite finds himself wondering whether the circumstances of which he is made acutely aware by the daily newspapers are things which are "beyond" him or whether they impinge upon *all* his roles and therefore require some response from each of them.

We would contend that there is a significant num-

ber of people acutely sensitive to this dimension of their lives. Unfortunately, however, there is no viable social, political, or church structure through which to express it. This need to create, in the metropolis, forums for the expression of concern is a central challenge.

Here we should note carefully the dominant basis on which contemporary society makes its judgments: namely, on a man's status as producer and consumer. Once an individual's status is modified for the worse or changed, not only does he cease to have community status but his very dignity as a human being in technological society is threatened if not mortally wounded. Despite all theologies, philosophies, and social ideologies to the contrary, this is precisely what happens; and it happens with the severity it does probably because the individual in question has judged so many others in precisely this way that he cannot himself escape the judgment.

This mind-set of society has ominous significance for us today as we face the prospect of an automated society. The steady march of industrialization now reaches out to work processes long thought to be immune to industrialization. By "industrialization" we refer to the whole system by which we seek to increase output and simultaneously to decrease input. Seen in this way Ford's assembly line, Shell's automated refinery, and John Hancock's automatic data-processing are all of a piece.

Until quite recently such problems as this have

not touched the main-line Protestant churches. The march of industrialization, however, is now beginning to move in, to displace accountants, tellers, store managers—in fact, the whole system of occupations generally known as "middle management." What it means for the churches is clear: it will impinge upon the lives of large numbers of church members, and it will accelerate as it moves. Indeed, what we see emerging is an era of extreme flux that will demand of the individual that he be exquisitely adaptive, eternally watchful, and entirely absorbed.

Some ministers have already had experience with this and have witnessed its devastating effects. But the whole church has not seen nor attempted either to ground people for it or to participate in decisions about how it should be approached.

The second observation to be made about man's work today is that it is contextually associational. While the meaning of his work arises both from its content and from his work associations, his daily work problems center much more on his interpersonal relationships with his co-workers (even though he may see many of them face-to-face only occasionally) than on the job *per se*—the lab experiment, the insurance sales program, or the design of an urban renewal project. The associational context of the work, therefore, is paramount.

One Manhattan clergyman has been given special recognition for his effort "to provide a ministry to

jazz musicians." In recent years other clergymen have been spotlighted for their programs to relate religion to occupations or to culture in various ways. The quick conclusion drawn from this approach is that the church needs only to go out and meet people "where they are." And from my observation this means all too frequently "where they are physically." But a proliferation of special ministries on this basis could be disastrous.

The important element in any specialized ministry is not the where but the *what;* and once the *what* is worked out, it may well be that the special ministry is one more properly for laymen than the ordained minister. The trained theologian, the clergyman, may need to give the matter his special attention along the way in helping to work toward the solution. But thereafter, the ministry should be one for businessmen in the parish or parishes to carry through.

The Division of Christian Life and Work, NCC, has recently published its report on the pilot occupational ethics projects in six selected areas of occupation carried out in various cities.[1] A number of significant factors emerge from the report. Several of them are pertinent to our discussion: (1) that the degree of specialization and specialized problems that emerged proved to be far more complex than was initially assumed; (2) that the groups (although some

[1] Cameron Hall, ed., *On-the-Job Ethics* (New York: NCCC), 1963.

of them only after some initial fumbling) were well able to locate the problems and practices that needed special attention and action; (3) that the church's service was not in offering ready-made answers but rather in providing the occasion for such meetings, listening, and offering help and comment when requested; and, lastly, that it became very clear that this whole area was an important lay ministry.

We deliberately limit our attention only to these observations in the report simply to stress the point of the importance of the *what,* and the folly of believing that one has merely to go out to where people are physically and somehow or other manipulate the situation. For if anything is true of the metropolite, it is that he will travel fantastic distances to find what he needs and wants, and that he will not so much as go around the corner for something which has no relation in his eyes to his life and needs.

Hence these cautionary observations and the stress once more on using or pooling available resources.

What Developments Next? 8

The belief is common among Americans that during the past five or six decades they have been moving steadily toward an economic situation in which there are ever fewer rich and ever fewer poor, and ever *more* of a vast middle class who by and large enjoy the fruits of our abundance.

That this belief is myth and without ground in reality has been rather rudely brought to our attention. First, there was Michael Harrington's book, *The Other America,* which described the rapidly expanding affluent society of the richest country on earth as being painstakingly blind to the lives of 50,000,000 poor Americans—the minorities, the unskilled workers, the migrant farm laborers, the aged, the derelict—who inhabit an elaborate economic underground of self-perpetuating subcultures and slums.

Then there has been President Johnson's "War

against Poverty." In announcing this program he made it abundantly clear that a realistic awareness of the situation of the poor is vital to the country and, moreover, that the even more vital concern for an effective program to counteract this situation must be based on a long-term, comprehensive effort. Despite vast slum clearance and urban renewal projects, very nearly one-third of our people are still living in substandard housing conditions. We work like crazy and throw vast resources into trying to improve this condition, and we end up not only standing still, but very frequently even moving backward.

More ominous than any single element in the poverty picture is the fact that today's poor are less likely to move out of their circumstances than they might have been some thirty years ago. Current writers have been using the phrase "two cultures" to describe what is happening. One culture is that which has adapted to change, participates in it, and enjoys most of the benefits of economic abundance. The other culture is the one that has not been able to make the necessary adjustments. To a considerable extent, of course, there are those who have not been *allowed* to make the change—this, the familiar area of discrimination. But, we must be careful to avoid too easy generalizations. Merely to arrive at the point of providing completely free mobility (of all kinds) for all people may be missing the even bigger issue.

We have the young, who are increasing in num-

ber at a faster rate than are jobs for them to work at. Competition is severe. Some fight it out; others don't. And those who step out soon find it impossible to step back in. We have the elderly, who have discovered that their brave, sacrificial annuity plans for retirement just barely meet the grocery and rent bills—if that. Those pictures of fishing in Florida look pretty ridiculous to the average retired couple. Only those who have enjoyed top level careers in their creative years and draw a salary on retirement, make out rather well. Like the young man who cannot get back in job competition, the elderly who just subsist are trapped right where they are.

The middle-income worker who has invested all his time in a skill which falls victim to automation is also trapped. If he has not already lost his job, he is continuously worrying about it—hardly an atmosphere conducive to studying something else. There are those whose response to such a threat is to scout around systematically; but those who do not are trapped. Even the professional who counts on a few of the developed techniques of his profession will find himself out of the swim of things. And despite the fact that he is likely to be more familiar with educational opportunities, it is often just as difficult for him to face up to his own re-training needs as it is for the lathe operator. He, too, may be trapped.

Painting with a broad brush, we can observe that the core city and the older parts of the metropolitan

region tend mostly to be the places where people are most readily trapped, while the suburban rings tend to be where the cultural mobiles live. We cannot entirely assume that there is a willful disorientation of the suburbanite from the woes and cares of the core city. There are some suburbanites for whom this awareness is a major preoccupation. We say that the suburbanite does not accept the responsibility he should, and inevitably must, feel for his neighbors who live in the core city.

The cultural mobile does not particularly worry about change. He moves around within it, participates in it—maybe even makes a fetish of it. But the culturally trapped person is victimized by change. His reaction to it tends to be extreme: either he is revolution-prone or he is the staunchest advocate of the status quo. Many suburbanites are of the latter order. And it could well be this particular species of the culturally trapped which constitutes the "choking white collar," strangling the life out of the hard-pressed core cities of the metropolitan regions.

One notable factor in all this—one compounding the problem—has been the communication void. This is characterized by the use of language that is either so specialized that only the few understand it, or so superficial that its meaning is a matter of utter indifference.

What has happened is that, with the growth of specialized fields of endeavor, there has been the need

to develop symbols to express new ideas. We do, from time to time, coin new words. But more commonly we attach new meanings to old, or slightly amended, words. Through shared usage, communication exists between experts within the same field. But the outsider remains mystified. Ordinarily this is not a problem. But when the outsider is seen as one of the body politic whose general understanding is necessary for the support of proposals that he must understand, this becomes a very real problem indeed. I see this particular part of the problem as an honest one.

A serious dimension to this aspect of the communication void concerns the breathtaking advances in science and technology. From medicine to metallurgy, from bacteriology to radio astronomy, new knowledge of the force and direction of life has been attained, new ways to manipulate the human organism have been developed. Even the experts race full time to keep up, and the layman is left woefully behind. So much of the federal budget voted by our elected representatives in the Congress is devoted to scientific development that it is nothing short of a catastrophe for the public to perceive its implications so dimly. I would venture to guess that even when as well distributed a magazine as *Life* undertakes a reasonably serious interpretative piece on some aspect of science, not one person in a thousand reads it with any comprehension.

A less honest but possibly more pervasive aspect of the communication void is the deliberate cultivation

of expertise to confuse the uncircumcised and to enhance one's own membership in the club. I have encountered a good many people who are word-eager. Lovingly they latch onto new phraseology—much too hastily to understand its meaning. Like any good preacher, they are constantly on the alert for a new turn of phrase that will add sparkle to their next monologue.

This is a part of a pattern that has already been hinted at—massive superficiality. It is not a new phrase, but it is an apt one: "we know less and less about more and more." We pride ourselves in this country about being an educated people. We are certainly exposed to a fantastic variety of thought arenas. But for the most part this seems to be more "arena" than it is "thought."

The question we must now ask is: How does the church relate to this? What is it able to do within this complex social pattern that seems to be evolving further divisions between the affluent and the poor, the mobile and the trapped, the meaningful and the superficial?

The church knows that it cannot be indifferent to the poor if the Gospel means anything. It knows as well that it cannot be indifferent to the form that society will take, as the church also lives in and with society. It knows further that it cannot be indifferent to the disintegration of meaning and the massive superficiality that confronts this society on all levels.

It is not the function of the church to solve the details of this problem, but it *is* a function of the church to bear witness to the principles of love and justice which must inform every detail of solution and to plead for that form of mind, that openness, that can responsibly hear what all sides are saying and attempt a solution that sees clearly the commonweal and the interdependence of all sectors of society.

There is a real urgency to this problem of Metropolis. How urgent it is let us simply note, by way of conclusion, some of the things that Jean Gottmann says in his study, *Megalopolis.*[1] Of the sources of the problem, he observes:

"An opposition of interest grows between those who live and those who only work in the central cities. The business function of the city, of course, depends on both groups. Such trends toward opposition of interests cannot go on indefinitely without deeply disturbing the social and economic cooperation that must somehow be maintained between the various groups in Megalopolis. . . . Many urban renewal projects endeavor to restore the quality of some central city neighborhoods and attract better, middle-class residents to them. However, there is the danger that they may only 'protect' against the urban expansion of the newcomers without providing better housing for the

[1] Published by Twentieth Century Fund, 1961; see pp. 720, 722, 737-38, 777.

latter somewhere else. In that case, while they may locally modify some widely deplored statistical trends, in practice they will only transfer to other areas the more acute and fundamental problems."

With respect to a specific instance he asks: "As Megalopolis specializes in the upper stages of manufacturing, requiring more knowledge and skill, and turns increasingly toward the communications-oriented industries and white-collar occupations, will it be possible to overcome the prejudice that stands in the way of closer relations between the different social groups? Will it be possible to open the expanding executive and professional employment widely to Negroes and Puerto Ricans?"

But he also sounds this warning: "Besides the new entanglements rooted in the present evolution of the social and economic structure, one must consider the significance of the new opposition that is shaping between those who only work and those who both work and live in the city—between neighbors who seem at the same time linked by close economic interdependence and opposed in their concerns for land use and for the services they desire in their places of work and of residence. This antithesis between the two main functions of the city is a kind of threat to the whole regional system that did not seem to exist in past periods."

About the evolution of Megalopolis and contemporary responsibility he writes: "The first evolution

must be achieved in the minds of the people, and many signs indicate that it is already occurring. Too often, alas, the inadequacy of institutions is blamed for the difficulties encountered. Governmental institutions, relationships, and regulations now in force have, of course, been established for some time, in accordance with patterns of needs and resources different from those observed today and forecast for the future. Some evolution in the legislation and the governmental structure has already been noticed, and much more is undoubtedly forthcoming. An improved organization and the solution of the major problems will be easier to achieve once the people have fully realized the new features of their life and environment. . . .

"The forces bringing about this evolution are rooted in a deep transformation of modern modes of life and habitat. They are not determined in other areas just by an imitation of Megalopolis, and yet the element of imitation spurs the evolution on.

"These trends bestow a heavy responsibility upon the present inhabitants and leadership of Megalopolis. In many ways they may be rightly proud of serving as a model. They must, however, be mindful of the long-range consequences of these trends."

Part III

Emerging Patterns

Ever since the apostles looked for "seven men" to take care of the business matters in the church, the church has been involved *officially* with the physical and social concerns of society. In early times, the church was the first organization to provide hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes, and other such facilities for local communities. It fought for the humane treatment of prisoners, and it boldly rebuked emperors when it thought they were intruding upon the freedom of their people. "Love of the brethren," "seeing Christ in every man"—these were the profound attitudes which propelled early Christian leaders into the center of community life, and inspired them to shape that community life as no other group of people has ever done before or since.

So it is, and must always be, a characteristic function of the church to shape society, to be effective in the creation of human communities.

The church's disorientation from the modern

community is therefore something unnatural to it—its concerns are too limited; its resources are too largely neglected. In the following chapters, we shall look at the available means for shaping society today, for creating communities. It may then be possible to see how the church can take hold of these means and, through conscientious use of them, resume its social responsibility in the world—because the world needs its God.

9 Urban Planning—New Metropolitan Forum

This chapter is a hopeful one, pointing to what may well be emerging as a forum for responsible public concern on the part of the metropolitan community—urban planning. To continue this note of optimism for a moment, the relevance of such a concern should be indicated by saying that it is an evolving and potentially effective sharing, among many groups, of policies and ideas. If this is the case, the church must recognize the importance of its own active participation. In order to discuss this, however, it is not enough simply to say that a new forum of communication is taking shape. To prove this and show its relevance we must begin not with the church, but with the historical development of urban planning—the only movement which has consistently sought a comprehensive organization of land relationships and uses. With such a background, we will then be able to talk about the church's stake in this development.

Before 1900, cities as corporate entities were relatively unconcerned with their physical well-being. What we recognize today as the evils of overcrowding land were then unforeseen. Where building codes existed at all, they were crude and easily overlooked. Whole cities lacked disposal systems to carry away disease-breeding wastes. That more thought was given to exploiting needs than to planning for the future is indicated by the fact that in architectural design contests the prize went to the architect who succeeded in maximizing the number of people to be housed on a given parcel of land.

As the congestion and confusion grew, however, the need for certain reforms became so severe that attention to them was unavoidable. New building codes, with regulations on plumbing, structure, and so forth, began to appear. Health laws were enacted. Shocked observers such as Lincoln Steffens who reported appalling graft and corruption in city government, led the way to administrative reforms. American lack of experience with urban living was beginning to cost the nation mightily.

Then, in 1893, the World's Fair in Chicago gave birth to what has been called the "city beautiful" movement. The stock-in-trade of this movement was primarily architectural, in that it dealt with broad vistas, statuary focal points, design controls for height and form, bucolic parks, and tree-lined boulevards. The planners of the day were drawn from the ranks of architecture, landscape architecture, and civil engi-

neering—all professions geared to thinking in terms of physical design.

These persons certainly were not unmindful of social and economic problems in the community; but their assumption that the emerging reform movements would provide the solutions for them was, unfortunately, groundless. While it was true that some articulate voices addressed themselves to urban social problems, there was very little organized or professionalized activity. The role of the city's champion was thus left to the architect-planners themselves. To them the city became an entity, even a personality, that needed to be defended against the ravages of the multitudinous forces which were already working to destroy the countryside by building monster factories, company housing, and inadequate alleyways called streets.

Initially these planners worked with what tools they had—mostly the drafting board and T square. In Chicago the Daniel Burnham plan provided for an elaborate new program of highways, a new civic focus, and a vast reclamation of the waterfront for the benefit of all the people of the city. A generation of high school students was fed on the dreams of this plan. Its most imaginative part, the waterfront, became a reality when these children became adult voters. But even as the plan materialized, it became apparent that it provided no more than an attractive front door to the built-up parts of the city which, just behind the waterfront, were rapidly turning into slums.

Sensitive to the increasing charges that they were

"window dressers," planners turned their attention more and more to the device of the "master plan." Welcoming the assistance of lawyers who had joined the battle, they began to draft legislation which would give some teeth to their dreams for a more orderly way of building cities. In the early 1900's, a standard state Enabling Law appeared that set forth the necessary elements for a master plan program. The standard was developed under the aegis of the United States Department of Commerce.

Once such enabling legislation was passed by a state legislature, the cities in the state would be able to enact their own local legislation. The cities could then set up official planning commissions, or boards, to engage in local planning. At this juncture the concept of planning was being built around the assumption that it was time for the city to begin to fend for itself. This asumption was more accurate than the earlier one made by the planners—that there were "others" who would do the work in the social and economic arena.

It was painfully true during the first three decades of the twentieth century that land urbanization was often the equivalent of land exploitation. It is still true today, of course, but not quite so blatantly or accompanied by such massive apathy. Raw land was held and developed in an orgy of speculation, reaching its climax in the late twenties, when acres upon acres of the land on the fringes of our large cities were subdivided, sold in lots, equipped with sewer, water, and

sidewalks—only to be left as fields of weeds, some of these parcels remaining in this state into the 1960's. Lots facing on major streets were almost invariably sold as commercial land, setting the pattern for "ribbon commercial districts." Mushrooming factories became gruesome blots on the landscape; and no attempt was made to curb nuisance by-products such as smoke, noise, and pollution of water.

There certainly did not seem to be any evidence that the planners could turn to the perpetrators of these urban ills for support for the city beautiful. American society and economy were still riding along on the early philosophy that our land supply was inexhaustible, that we could use what we occupied until it was exhausted and then move on to greener pastures. We have not worked our way out of this philosophy yet, but, as we shall see later, we are being forced to make progress.

So it was that the master plan came into being. It was essentially a scheme whereby the planners mapped their goals and objectives for better urban living, portraying them in an orderly arrangement of the use of land—a place for everything and everything in its place.

When the first plans appeared, however, they created nothing more than an initial jolt of interest. This lagged quickly, and the plans and designs which had been worked up so laboriously soon gathered dust in archives. While people agreed with the general objectives of the planners, they were not prepared to

adjust to the specifics which would have to be accepted if the master plan was to be realized.

As a consequence, planners began to enlist the services of still other disciplines to help promote the idea that cities *could* develop according to a plan. Into the fray came sociologists, economists, and geographers to add their insights to the plan-making. It was felt that through the added contributions of these specialists more could be learned about the city and its people, and that the recommendations of the master plan would therefore be more comprehensive, more "realistic," hence more acceptable.

This approach did not help very much. The concept of the city as its own defender, the concept of planning as a mechanism of defense, continued to buck against prejudices and notions about what was best for the city; and the people still were not buying the master plan.

With hindsight we can see that such reluctance is almost inherent in the very nature of the presentation. For, while it is perfectly possible for the design-oriented professional to separate ideas and objectives from specific facts on a map, the average person simply is not trained to think in these terms. To him a map is a statement of fact, a dependable guide to lead him from place to place. And when he looks at a map of his own town or city, he looks for the location of his home. If he does not like the looks of what he sees, he simply opposes the plan. It matters not a whit to him that in rejecting the plan, he is also rejecting the long-

range goals for civic betterment that the plan presumably represents.

So once again, despite the added knowledge about people and places in the city, master plans continued to be stacked high in archives. What happened next in the planning movement, however, was probably the most important breakthrough; but it was not done on purpose, and most planners did not immediately grasp its implications (and some still don't).

The new development came about when two new approaches to the preparation and presentation of master plans were made. First, it was conceded that any *one* plan was not unalterable after all. Maybe people had to see that there were alternatives and, further, that those in key places could be given the opportunity to do a certain amount of selecting. Second, concerning the presentation of a planned design, many realized that it might be helpful to have it introduced in easy stages, carefully labeling the early drafts with the words "pre-preliminary," "interim," or just about anything that would allay citizens' fears that an unsympathetic group in City Hall was trying to put something over on them.

These are the ideas that were in the air as the war clouds collected during the late thirties. They ripened during the war years, and emerged as a new principle in the urban planning movement when the great catching-up wave of urban growth came after the war. The ideas had the effects that the planners sought: people felt less threatened, and seeing alterna-

tives assured them that the movement was still, potentially at least, within the public domain.

More significantly, however, the planners discovered that if they were to be working now with "early drafts" and "alternatives," they would have to elicit from people what they themselves felt should be the long-range policies of urban growth, development, and renewal. This pushed plan-making back into planning as a *process*—something which was *going on,* rather than something which had already happened. This caught a lot of urban planners flat-footed, and a number of them still have not recovered.

In my judgment this breakthrough is one which is not reversible. It is highly unlikely that the growing number of individuals and groups involved in the planning process are all going to quit. What we appear to be confronted by today is a mounting acceptance that, if we are to achieve any measure of control over our physical environment, it will come through the process of planning. Furthermore, it is in connection with the urban planning movement as a process that a concern has been focused on the "larger community" —the metropolis.

This, I hasten to add, is not to say that all urban planning has become metropolitan planning. Activities are still, for the most part, limited to currently existing political boundaries. However, there has been a consistent effort to broaden the scope of the work, particularly in the areas of analysis and long-range goals, to include the totality of the metropolis.

Through the years these efforts have resulted in the creation of metropolitan planning associations. Some of these have been created by official action by the cities and towns making up the metropolis. Others are private associations in which municipal corporations, trade associations, businesses, and individuals may hold a membership by subscription. Whatever their authority, they have had a major impact on the thinking of a great many people. They have stimulated important conversations, and have constantly insisted upon the need for beginning to come to grips with the reality of the metropolitan community.

This insistence has helped to encourage the establishment of "divisions" of planning and community relations (there are many titles being used) within the framework of major industrial corporations. As often as not, these are staffed by people brought up and trained in the urban planning movement. Also one finds professionally qualified planners working in such widely diverse places as law firms, traffic bureaus, real estate offices, federal agencies, redevelopment commissions, communication centers, as well as in church groups, commerce departments in state governments, large scale private development corporations, and other places.

Not only is this movement (which is almost all post–World War II) evidence of a new and meaningful acceptance of community planning; it is also becoming the means for opening the new forum of communication spoken of at the beginning of this

chapter. Now as never before it is possible for groups and social organizations, each with its own special responsibilities, to come together for a fruitful sharing of basic goals and objectives.

And this is the real importance of the new forum. In the process of growing from a small-town rural society to a massive urban one, American society has had to create new institutions to handle multifarious community concerns: education, commerce, trade, labor, communication, transportation. At first these new institutions were chiefly self-contained. That is, they were involved primarily in the work of creating within themselves the structures to deal with the very problems that had originally brought them into being.

But now, as they mature and themselves become accepted, they are stretching their horizons and raising basic questions about the meaning of their work—their specialty—in terms of the life and long-range well-being of the community they serve. Internally they are in the process of creating metropolitan mechanisms; externally they are engaging in important exploratory talks with other institutions on the problems of identifying goals and sharing policies for the growth and development of the metropolitan community.

The gradual emergence of this new level of sharing is probably one of the most important developments in America in the past twenty years. Unfortunately, there is not yet much evidence that the church senses the dimensions of it, despite its importance to the church and to society.

Buildings and Locations 10

There is a fairly standard question that churchmen invariably ask me: "So you're a city planner. Well, tell me, what *is* a good location for a church from your vantage point?"

This question is asked for two reasons. First, a great many people in regional and national denominational offices are very much caught up in the demands of selecting sites for new churches and for financing the early stages of their operations. The second reason is that church people, like most other citizens, have a limited perspective on city planning and tend to see it strictly in its role of helping to determine the locations of things.

Usually I can parry this question, especially when it is posed as a general one.

"There are so many variables that it's hard to make any useful generalizations."

But right away this kind of answer starts a sorting-out process. Some church people immediately expect a critical check list of planning gimmicks—accessibility, visibility, optimal site sizes, off-street parking requirements, advance land purchases, etc. Other people, well aware that such a question begs additional ones, say something like, "Yes, you're right," and then wait to see what I shall say next.

One early experience of mine was especially illuminating. It occurred at a conference on church building and architecture. During a break in the formal proceedings, I was invited to talk with a group of some twelve to fifteen people who said they had a location problem. These people had been meeting together for about three years as a relatively informal worship and fellowship group. A national board of their denomination had put up some money to provide them with what is generally referred to as an organizing pastor.

Now the pressure was on. Under the rule that an investment must bring returns, the national body was beginning to "suggest" that it was time for the group to get on with the building so that the congregation could begin to grow and in due time become financially self-supporting.

In response to this pressure, they were looking at two possible sites for the church. One had high visibility. It was at the juncture of two important roads and, with appropriate setting, would be an impressive

focal point from the point of view of design. The other site was much less accessible and, no matter how they built on it, would be almost invisible. Yet it had a "retreat" character to it.

"How do we decide between the two?" they asked.

I countered with another question.

"How do you know you want to build a church?"

It was like opening a floodgate. It turned out that they were not in the least convinced that they wanted to build a church.

"Oh sure," one man said, "we could do it all right. We could toot around, sign up a lot of people, and be operating full blast in no time.

"But *then* what?" he asked, of no one in particular.

Most of the others, including their pastor, shuddered. As they talked, they visualized themselves as the core group which would, initially at least, fill the typical "positions" of a going concern: board members, chairmen of this and that committee, superintendent of the Sunday school, treasurer, and so on. When they examined this picture and compared it with what had been their religious experience as a group up to this point, the comparison was sharp and unfavorable. They felt that, for the first time, they had been involved in a situation in which the idea of a worshiping fellowship had had real meaning. It had been truly a sharing experience, and they were free to testify that it had sharply influenced their whole life: at work,

at home, in their clubs, and in their reactions to what was going on around them at every level of human existence.

The interesting thing is that there was no resentment of the critical question. I do not know what happened later. My guess is that eventually they probably did what the national board of their denomination expected. Financial pressure can be persuasive.

When I asked the same question in quite another set of circumstances—at a state council of churches—the reaction was entirely different. The executive officer of the council had read some of the literature we were beginning to produce on church planning and had begun to talk it up in his shop. It took some real spinning on his part, because the council was not rolling in wealth. And there were those on his board who thought that any new programs at the time were ill-advised.

But he persisted. I was called in, and we worked out an arrangement whereby I would spend a certain number of days a month working with them to develop a planning program. Unfortunately, as in so many other situations, we did not begin with a very clear agreement on what planning was. My approach at the beginning was to try to help develop a picture of what was happening in the state and the community in terms of social and economic problems, figuring that the first task of a planning program was to identify the critical concerns with which the proposed program was intended to deal.

This group was made up mostly of denominational executives with regional portfolios: districts, conferences, dioceses, synods, and the rest. These people not only made up the planning committee, but also constituted the top executive board for the council.

At first they sat still for my early agendas. But it became increasingly apparent as time went on that they were not particularly satisfied that we were making much "progress." Besides, there were a few (whose heavy financial support of the council gave their voices great weight) who felt that talking about the problems of people and their communities was not the business of a planning operation.

To them planning meant dealing principally with the problems of locating and relocating churches. They agreed that planning began with a concern, but the concern they were talking about was not the needs of people; it was rather the supposed needs of their churches—the demographic statistics *about* people which would guide them in deciding where to start, where to close, and where to merge churches.

The one thing we did do together, therefore, was get progressively unhappy with one another. The severing of relationships was only a matter of time. Near the end I invited to one of our meetings a staff person from a university-based operation which had built up quite a specialty of making nose-counting studies of "Xville and Its Churches." He came in with an armload of brightly colored spiral-bound reports,

fairly oozing with population pyramids, growth charts, maps showing the locations of churches in relation to suburban expansion, and other such pragmatics. These had the committee members drooling.

"Now this is more like it," they said. "This is what we should be doing."

Within a few months after I had left, they had produced a whopper of a report. They had studied one hundred communities and produced pages of statistics showing actual growth, percentage growth, church membership and its growth. Apparently this was to be used as a basis for determining which of these one hundred communities should receive special attention in respect to the building of new churches.

To me this is tragic. Compared to the massive challenges that threaten the very continuance of the institutional church as a viable and meaningful force in our society, the matter of church location is of very little significance. Yet here were these highly placed church leaders deliberately selecting to lose themselves in statistically mechanical mish-mash.

The one statistical sortie I did make during those brief months backfired. I gathered together the gross growth figures for the state, along with the population projections which were available from several sources, and pointed out that, if all the denominations collectively were to build ten times the number of churches in the next decade that they had in the preceding ten years (financially an utter impossibility),

they would fall even farther behind in ratio to the population than they were at that time.

The figures also showed that only a little over 50 per cent of the total population of the state was related to *any* of the major faiths, and that of this 50 per cent, only 40 per cent was related to the denominations making up the state council.

I had hoped that the combination of these two pieces of information would precipitate some serious discussion of the validity of constructing edifice-related congregations, as has been the accepted pattern from early American history. The effect was the opposite. We must build more and faster, they said. I doubt very much if they are, but I must say that I do not know for sure—my pass to get into that state has been rescinded.

Again, we are confronted with the deeply entrenched mind-set, with its agrarian roots, that has always wanted to provide a worship experience—an altar at which to worship—proximate to the place of residence. And this remains predicated upon an historical assumption of the personal one-to-one relationship of the pastor to his "flock."

When this nation began to recover from the debilitating impact of the depression of the thirties and the war years of the forties, it was hungry for meaningful religious experience. Predictably, it turned to the church—and the church responded by building churches. In a way, it was a perfectly logical thing to

do. The nation was behind in every kind of land use: homes, schools, stores, factories, and highways. So the church joined the building frenzy. To keep pace it established Church Extension Divisions in the denominations, some of them the sharpest and most competent development corporations the nation had ever seen.

For a decade the "seekers" after a religion tolerated, and even participated in, this great surge. But by about 1957 the leveling process set in. By then it had become apparent that for the church this had pretty much become "business as usual." It appeared that there was nothing substantial behind all the building; nothing that really spoke to the unspoken fears of a people who had, for nearly twenty years, walked along the edge of disaster.

Nothing sets this out more poignantly than the wistful recollection of one clergyman who had taken a congregation through the tribulations of a building program. "It was an exciting time," he said. "People were building for the work of the Lord, and the spirit was so fine—so Christian. All that seems to be lagging now, and I wonder if perhaps we ought not to be talking about a major addition. It would recapture those days."

It might. But more likely that particular honeymoon is over. I have mentioned one state in which only 50 per cent of the population now admits to adherence to any religious faith. A recent study of the state of Michigan indicated that 60 per cent of that

state was unchurched—a study which has been supported by detailed local studies in several communities there.

In Manhattan recently an Episcopal church sent out 3,500 carefully written letters to a carefully selected group of people who, it was hoped, would be interested in that church's work. Only thirty replies were received. Also in Manhattan, a Lutheran church made 15,000 phone calls to people living in the area of the church. Of the calls they listed 437 "possibles." One hundred and twenty personal callers were organized to seek out the potential. Results: zero!

We can build a lot of buildings or no buildings. We can shape them like fish or like factories. We can make them round or square, or we can pitch a tent in the field. We can set up shop in a coffee house, an abandoned store, a tavern, or a county jailhouse—it does not make any difference where. The point is that unless those who are *of* the church are clearly and demonstrably different from those who are *not*—forget it. We have people, buildings, and money. Use these resources properly, and they will be added to, in great abundance.

Decision-making II

There are many ways in which one can look at decision-making. I should like to think about it here as it is related to the urban planning movement, and in this way relate it to the church. The idea of planning itself as a process has already been described. The relationship of urban planning to public decision-making is that of a disciplined aid to it. No planner or planning commission has ever claimed that he, or it, should have the authority for public decision-making. But they have uniformly insisted that there must be a discipline to making decisions, and that planning could uniquely serve to provide and enhance that discipline.

As this chapter develops, therefore, we shall be weaving the steps in the decision-making process together with the techniques of planning as they accompany and serve the steps. Approached in this way, the steps are as follows:

Decision Required	*Technique/Aid*
1. definition of problem	1. survey, research, diagnosis, trend projection
2. formulation of goals	2. preparation of generalized alternative proposals to meet goals
3. tentative, or preliminary, statement of policy	3. test design for an action program
4. adoption of policy	4. preparation of comprehensive plan
5. effectuation	5. plan of components for operation; fiscal programming, etc.
6. impact	6. process review and analysis; feedback

To see quickly, and initially, that these steps form themselves into an analysis of continuous flow rather than a linear equation, consider the significant relationship between the first and the last steps. This indicates that as we examine the results of action taken, we reassess the decisions we made earlier about the kinds of information we would collect. This further influences the manner in which we diagnose the data.

This is not simply a circular pattern. A good analogy might be that of a moving wheel. Every part of the periphery of this wheel touches the reality of the road. Yet as each cycle is completed, the reality it touches is different from that of the preceding cycle. So it is with this process. We may start with the reality of a very pressing and urgent problem. But in working at the problem we may discover other aspects to it, not

previously known, that give it an entirely new dimension. So we record data concerning this new reality, and act in accordance with our knowledge of it. This knowledge is retained and amended as cycle follows cycle.

Let us examine these steps in further detail.

We start with the recognition of a problem, a concern, a sense of mission, an "irritant" demanding attention and resolution. To the extent of our resources, we probe the depths of this problem to determine, or postulate, its most basic causes. Out of this probing we begin to develop the need for specific information and data. We do not know initially whether data that we can list by title will fully document the problem in all its complexities. But we begin here, working to the limits of our present understanding.

We then make our survey—and this is not just a random collection of statistics. We must know at least partially why we are collecting data. But once this survey has begun, immediately the matter of discipline comes up. Many people, anxious to get on with the "action," will refer to the data either in a haphazard way, having already made up their mind what they want to do; or they will be highly selective in the use of data, assembling only that which will support their predisposition.

A properly disciplined survey program, however, will not allow this cavalier approach. A professional person will not only gather the obvious data, but will

constantly be working to find the problem behind the problems. Very seldom is the real problem the one that appears on the surface. Effects have causes—an ancient truth that continues to astound people.

Let us assume now that we have finally succeeded in acquiring the material necessary for an adequate definition of the problem, as seen in depth. (It should be clear that this concerns more than just statistics and measurements.) We next have the task of discussing the implications of that problem for "us"—whatever the "we" of the case happens to be. The implications of a city sanitation problem are not the same for the city engineer as they are for, say, the city health officer.

At this stage we write a more elaborate definition of the problem, in terms which will explain why we have a stake in it and are concerned with its ultimate resolution. This more elaborate definition includes more than survey and diagnosis—it includes prognosis. If the environment in which the problem exists continues in its present direction, we must consider here whether that direction is relieving or accentuating the situation. It is this dimension of the definition which creates, at the base, the sense of urgency which must be brought to it.

When we have reached the point where we understand the essential problem as best we are able, it is next incumbent upon us to set forth some statement of goals or objectives with respect to it. But typically, such statements turn out to be bland; and if they say

anything at all, they say something like, "We intend to do something about. . . ." All too often this is where the matter is laid to rest. Ultimately some activist arms himself with a whole briefcase full of these statements of Good Intentions, backs some top-level executives into a corner, and seizes the opportunity for promoting one of his own pet projects.

But this it not where the matter should rest. If the eventual development of institutional policy (and this is what we are talking about here) is to proceed in an orderly way, the next step in the process is to prepare and examine some preliminary studies of an alternative program which might serve the intention. Here, too, there is an assumption—that there may be more than one solution—which is difficult for the institutional activist to accept. *Yet it may be one of the most critical steps in the process.* Unless we have looked at a variety of approaches (even if only in a preliminary way), we will always be in a tenuous position when called upon for a basic defense of our work.

When we have looked at alternatives, we may actually decide that our previously stated intentions are no longer as definite as they seemed before. Or the alternatives available to us for carrying out our intentions may demand too much in the way of resource deployment. More likely, however, they will help us to see the most logical approach, given our resources.

The selection of a particular alternative then becomes the basis for the preparation of a preliminary,

or tentative, statement of policy. This too then goes into the testing laboratory, where it is subjected to a more detailed study. Here there will be worked out a test design for an action program. What was originally a study of just one of several possible alternatives is now detailed to show more precisely what the program requires in the way of money, people, institutional commitment, and so forth.

If we still survive after this disciplined—and often very threatening—step, we are then in the position of formally issuing a statement of policy. And the move that acts as a backstop for this is to produce the comprehensive plan for our program. This statement refines the earlier realities even further, and adds to them the dimensions of time schedule, budget, relationships to other existing and proposed programs, job descriptions, staff appointments, and the like.

Policy is now effectuated; the program is launched. As the period of implementation proceeds, there remains the constant need of checking events against the whole evolutionary process here described —not so much to make sure that exigencies of the moment do not destroy the basic purposes (although this may happen), but more to insist that significant departures are fully understood and accepted by those under whose authority the original plan was developed.

Ultimately a program is completed: a building is built; a program has become fully integrated into the work of the institution; a school has been established

—whatever we had set out to do has been achieved. But we are still not through. Now we must study the results of our work most carefully to see what they tell us about the accuracy of our original discernment of the problem, and to see what new things they reveal. A review period also provides the occasion for testing our own decision-making process, from the start to the finish. Thus we use it to analyze not only the content of our work, but also the procedures we used for arriving at our goals.

In "Urban Planning—New Metropolitan Forum," we talked briefly about comprehensive planning as a means for bringing together diverse groups within our society for the sharing of concerns. I would add here that those forces which have demonstrated an interest in such a forum (particularly those consciously participating in change) also reveal, by whatever description, a concern for the utilization of this discipline of decision-making.

There are a number of church officials who understand this, but regrettably the number is not yet a significant one. For the institutional church in general, what we have been saying here is a densely obscured mystery. When we look objectively at what are often called "church activities," the only thing we see that seems to stand for decision-making usually takes the form of an undirected, blindfolded leap. There is little recognition that the ground being covered in such a jump is full of pitfalls, and that the hiring of another

official, who will spend the rest of his days defining his task as the extension of his own little empire, does nothing but compound the dangers. The heart-felt need for a responsible and disciplined program is evident, just as the promotion of budget increases to implement it is not a real difficulty. But if the church is going to participate in the serious decision-making we have spoken of—as it must—then it must learn more about the use of its budget in the workings of its institutional policy.

Pastor or Church Administrator

12

Recently one major church organized a management-training program for those of its staff whose jobs were administrative at the regional level. While all the participants were ordained clergymen with pastoral backgrounds, their current assignments were strictly non-parochial. The program was conducted by a professional management-consultant firm. In another large denomination, the officers of a division of the national office are examining, in a series of meetings, the administrative problems that give them trouble.

What lies behind the need for these programs? The answer is the simple fact that training for the pastorate does not include administrative training. The local pastor is not usually a trained administrator, although he may have many organizational and administrative demands placed on him.

In this chapter we shall be concerned with the work of those churchmen whose jobs are non-paro-

chial and whose portfolios include a wide variety of tasks requiring some skill in organizing time and workloads; in supervising personnel; in producing and managing budgets; in organizing and directing conferences, committees, and boards; in reporting and recording; and in assuming and sharing responsibility. These men are usually heads of departments or program supervisors. And almost invariably in the institutional church, they are ordained clergymen—trained for and experienced in the pastorate. In the churches there seems to be a tacit agreement that this work should be done by men with a pastoral background, the one exception being church treasurers who are usually laymen and who exercise considerable influence on the development of church funds.

This chapter will deal with the problems of the administrator who was formerly a pastor. Let us begin with the role of the pastor as servant—perhaps the most critical of all his roles. When someone with a difficulty knocks on the pastor's door, his difficulty forthwith becomes the pastor's. If the response is the same at the regional and national level, it can wreak utter havoc with the organizational machinery.

While to a considerable extent it is the responsibility of the administrator also to serve, he must assess where his services are required and be sensitive to what people are saying or asking for. The real problem here lies in his making the transition from the pastoral one-to-one relationship to the administrative organizational framework. The pastor holds this face-

to-face contact in reverence, as well he might. But the administrator must deal with people in the aggregate; he must deal with statistics and learn to understand that he is still dealing with people.

As an individual he will naturally continue to meet people face-to-face who have problems on which they think the administrator's unit should be working. But the administrator's specific unit is now part of a larger network. He belongs to an organization made up of other administrators who also encounter people with problems. It becomes the task of the organization as a whole to consider and assess *all* the problems of *all* the people served, and then to determine how the resources of the whole organization can best be organized to serve the aggregate needs. By determining this, administrators can be better guided in their various programmatic activities.

But the tenacity with which clergy-administrators hold on to the individual approach is often a real difficulty, as this illustration from a personal experience will show. I had occasion recently to invite a group of people working together in a large national unit to list what they considered to be the more vexing administrative problems. Among those listed was the problem of unscheduled visitors dropping in for a chat. I ventured the opinion that all possible precautions (receptionists, secretaries, closed office doors, and so on) should be taken to guard against this. Several of the group reacted violently. "Visitors are

people," they said, "and no matter how important the work might be, it can wait."

Visitors are indeed people, but the administrator's work also concerns people—many people. He may be in his office two days out of the working week. Just one long-winded visitor can easily kill half a day, or 25 per cent of his office time for that week. However strongly the clergy-administrator may feel about his availability to the man who comes knocking on the door, there is a real question as to whether it is responsible behavior on his part to give one man's problems priority over the work that concerns many.

To mention that the administrator might be in his office for only two days of the week suggests another aspect of the problem. It is not only the casual visitor who may come to the office and disrupt the work schedule; it can also be the man who calls long distance and says, "Bob, I've got a problem." Bob may very well hop the next jet! This is called being a pastor to the pastors.

There are many clergy-administrators working at regional and national levels who see their role primarily in this pastoral context. Let us grant at once that the pastoral function is an important one. As long as there is an institutional system whose structure extends from the local church to the national organization, provision must be made within it for effective means of interpersonal communication. The local pastor most definitely needs someone within the system

with whom he can share professional and personal problems in a manner that will not threaten his peer-group relationships, but by and large the church does not handle it efficiently.

To grant the critical importance of the pastoral role does not solve the problem before us, for the administrator still has the task of meeting his administrative responsibilities. There are, sad to say, too many who find in long-distance phone calls and trips an excuse for neglecting other concerns. A man working at the national level can convince himself that it is important for him to be in close touch with the "troops"—and forthwith spend 50 per cent of his time traveling around the country, becoming enmeshed in the immediate problems of his regional administrators. I have met a number of men who have worked this way. Eventually time catches up with them, and they are replaced. They so skewed their workload in favor of this personalized attention that they have not performed their home-office responsibilities.

The other facet of this problem which needs discussing is that of determining priorities out of the many demands that come an administrator's way. I have a close friend who has difficulties in this area. Like most administrators, he has a board to which he is immediately responsible. The bulk of his effort for a number of years was in trying to determine precisely what it was that his board wanted him to do. Those of us with whom he counseled kept telling him that it was just as important for him to be telling the board what

needed doing. We pointed out that he is called to a leadership role, that the nature of his position is such as to give him a unique and important overview of needs, and that the servant role here, if carried to the extreme, will result not only in his having no program but also in boredom.

The real issue here lies in grasping the essential role of the administrator-officer, whether related to the church or to any other institution. Historically, councils, boards, commissions, or committees did have the task of grinding out policies and priorities. They still have the *responsibility* for this, but their essential *task* is to guide a staff which itself is supposed to do the bulk of this kind of work. The administrator's role is a new one in our society—one which is still in the process of being defined. This much, however, does seem clear: he is part of the decision-making process, and neither a mere minion who carries out orders, nor a one-man show who decides everything in his own personal way. Assuming a role that allows little of either of these attitudes may be difficult for clergy-administrators. Because these clergy-administrators work mostly with other clergymen, the question of parity among them can become acute in the administrative practice. Between themselves clergy "share" with one another, but as soon as one of them makes clear his authority, there is likely to be some bristling.

The other administrative problem that at times is overwhelming is that of supervising secretarial work. The working efficiency of an organization can, to a

large degree, stand or fall on the way in which clerical personnel are used. Some administrators, for example, never learn how to use a personal secretary. I am thinking of one man whose secretary never knows where he is or when he will be back. She feels that if she were to take the initiative in anything, her job would be in jeopardy. When he gives her a task, he makes no effort whatsoever to fill her in on the total picture so that she might be able to follow through with the next logical step. Many of our clergy-administrators travel a lot, and most of them do not take time to discuss with their secretaries what work needs to be done in their absence. They give no indication of what kinds of requests or correspondence might be coming in during their trip. And when they are not traveling, many administrators make no effort to sort correspondence in such a way that would permit a secretary to handle even the most routine matter.

One would think that clergy-administrators would be aware of this, but the whole area of interclerical relationships is vastly overlooked. The fact is that in any office employing a sizable number of secretaries and clerks there is a constant skirmishing in the areas of authority, precedence, responsibility, and seniority. Depending upon their understanding of it, administrators can either aggravate the situation or resolve it. Special confusion arises in cases where two or more share one secretary, or where the secretaries are in a "pool" (a device which more often than not is disastrous).

What general observations can we make about these problems?

(1) I think the church is going to need even more people than it has now who are engaged in working within an administrative-institutional framework.

(2) It is probable that such people will continue, in large measure, to be drawn from the ranks of the clergy, who are trained and experienced in the pastorate.

(3) This means that the national church offices are going to have to formalize some administrative-executive training programs to shake these men loose from their strictly pastoral format.

(4) There will be a growing interest in the idea of using lay people for administrative jobs.

This last point leads to a final observation. Along with this growing interest the church is beginning to distinguish between a pastor and an administrator—to realize that the two positions require quite different skills and orientations. Should the church move toward an increased use of the laity for administrative jobs, there could emerge considerable uneasiness on the part of the clergy. The administrative jobs often carry with them a considerable amount of authority and influence. Directly or indirectly, they have much to say about the mobility of professional personnel, about pay scales, about loans and grants for many special purposes. Many pastors will have difficulty submitting to a lay authority in these matters.

Interdenominational Projects 13

For those who have a deep concern for the separateness of the branches of the church, these are exciting times. The council called by Pope John XXIII generated fantastic speculations and hopes, and Pope Paul VI has furthered this communication between the churches. We can see certain patterns evolving already. In the United States, among certain Protestant circles, it is fast becoming a symbol of recognition to be engaged in communication with a Roman Catholic clergyman. (I do not know if the reverse is true or not.)

Time only will tell whether all this new exchange will be effective in closing the gaps and healing the breaks. I am sure this is the prayer. I am sure also that this has been the nature of the prayer of those who have worked to develop the various councils made up of Protestant churches in our country. Here it has not

been so much to heal historical breaks as to provide the mechanism for working together at tasks commonly conceived; but the working together often does have an ecumenical impact.

My own experience with ecumenical relationships is a limited one, but I have worked on the interdenominational level, and while this is not always the same thing, observations about the Protestant experience with extra-denominational outreach do say something about Protestants and ecumenical relations.

Before discussing my own experience in interdenominational circles, however, it will help to discuss briefly the different ways this work is carried on in the church. Most, but not all, interdenominational work in the United States take place in church councils. There are several kinds of councils. In the cities and towns there are local councils that are generally called federations. Their membership is made up of specific local churches, and has very little to do with denominational policies as such. State councils of churches, on the other hand, are councils of all the represented denominations. Persons from the communions attending these councils are usually people whose assigned areas of work include the state within a larger regional structure. In the Presbyterian Church, for example, the same man is largely responsible for both its regional synod and for Presbyterian participation in the state councils within the region. The National Council of Churches is also a council of the denominations. Its

various boards and top level committees and commissions are made up of representatives from the respective denominations.

From a brief description like this, the hierarchy of interdenominational councils would appear to be a tightly structured and highly efficient operation. Yet contrary to what many people think, there is, in my observation, only weak communication between these councils from the local, through the state, to the national body. Each denomination which participates in the work of these councils does, of course, possess a fully integrated system of communication and involvement. But the national council has practically nothing to say about the work and program of the Michigan council; and the Michigan council has very little to say about the Saginaw Valley federation. Furthermore, communication is not the only problem. Each of the varieties of councils has its own particular difficulties to hamper it.

Federations of churches present a rather sad picture. They have many committees which meet frequently and engage in a great deal of conversation. Now and again they will agonize over some pronouncement which, by the time it is written, will be too late with too little. From time to time they may be the focal point for some good work such as sponsoring a summer camp program, or collecting clothing for some disaster area in a far corner of the globe.

But if the disaster area is somewhat closer and

it happens—as it certainly does in widely scattered areas—that a local federation gets deeply involved in a highly volatile situation in its own local community, it is more than likely that there will be great internal pressure to make it retreat as fast, and as graciously, as is humanly possible. A common means of excuse for such a retreat is that church administrators "don't give the support we really need to fight this out on the grass roots level."

State councils of churches practice *comity*. For non-church people this often has to be spelled out because they think the word is "comedy." Comity refers generally to cooperation between the various denominations in connection with the location of new churches or the relocation of old ones. The idea is that they will not build too close to one another and cancel out the congregational potential of any particular residential area. It is not hard to see that this can get pretty wild at times.

Comity is not, of course, the only thing with which state councils of churches are concerned. They have various other programs. Once in a while they become involved in a major social issue, but only rarely. And when they do, the experience often leaves the council emotionally and financially shaken.

Now it may be straining the argument to try to draw important conclusions from these facts, which may be nothing more than accidents of history. But more likely it is not that simple. If we recall that

within each denominational polity the local parish is viewed as the critical front line, and if we relate this to the denomination, then we almost have to conclude that denominational policies are pretty firmly and intentionally entrenched. There even seems at times to be a studied balancing of conflicting ideas which, through a common, silent consent, insures that the councils will not be particularly meaningful.

A description of an ineffectual council action will best serve to point this out. Councils at both the state and national levels are made up of people who are there to represent their denominations. There are some who are appointed to boards and commissions as "at large" members, but the basic pattern is that of representation. Now what does representation of a denomination or even a local parish imply? Is such a thing possible, or is it a misnomer? I have yet to meet anyone who could "represent" the "thinking" of his denomination. It takes months, if not years, for a denomination to develop an official point of view on almost any subject. And when it does, it is so general and so well advertised in the press (especially if the subject is a controversial one like birth control or school prayers) that everyone already knows what it is.

But does this give pause to the representative? Not for a minute. If he happens personally to like, or dislike, some program being discussed or proposed, he will speak out most positively about how the program reflects or is in contradiction to the "policy of my communion."

Interestingly enough, no one would think of actually challenging someone making such a statement. This is one of those things that is just not done. By common consent, board and committee members go along with the fiction. And the upshot of it is that work in the councils of churches can be of a most bland sort. The councils tend to become the places where the least possible happens.

My own experience has often been of this kind, where active programs tend to get run into the ground. I worked in the urban church section of one national-level council. Here we were early concerned with "planning." We made substantial efforts to bring church people into contact with city planners, housing officials, redevelopment people, and others involved in the changing patterns of physical living environment. Drawing upon the experience of these people, we actually "preached" the discipline of the planning process—an orderly system for proceeding from the awareness of a concern or a need to some responsible action toward a resolution of that concern or need.

The word "planning" soon became popular enough to attract the attention of this council's top administrators. But there was a difficulty in this ready popularity that soon became apparent. The council people we worked with, and some whom we worked against, were men with years of experience in "planning." They had planned curricula for Christian education. They had planned for projects of many kinds. What was all the hollering about?

The word went back to them that this kind of planning was quite different. It involved a surprisingly new idea: that the church should be planning for its own role in a changing urban culture.

Those who began to understand this soon started producing documents about "long-range planning." They wrote about the needs of people, and proposed conferences all over the country. But the old notion that one "shared concerns," and then devised a project directly from these concerns to meet them, prevented any sensible follow-through. It was never understood that expressed concerns are often effects that have their antecedents in causes, and that dealing with these causes requires study and diagnosis. Nor did anyone ever take account of the need for examining alternative approaches, or the need for developing plans for tentative action to test their institution's readiness to proceed. Predictably enough, what happened was that "planning conferences" were held, stirring people up with ideas and expectations—with no follow-through.

This kind of program emasculation is not infrequent in interdenominational councils. In another instance a regional planning institute was developed in an effort to establish a training mechanism that would expose clergy-administrators working at regional levels (synods, districts, dioceses, etc.) to the facts of the metropolitan community and the problems and pressures of the people within it. What developed was an in-residence, two-week institute, preceded by a

three-month correspondence course with required reading and writing assignments.

We built into the institute in its first year a number of irritants—non-church people from planning and redevelopment who had some fairly harsh things to say about the church. It was a traumatic experience for a number of participants—most church-sponsored conferences are attended by "friends" who have kind thoughts about the church. But most of the participants stuck it out, and for many it had a notable effect upon their work.

Two years later, however, the third such institute was scheduled. And by this time it had been decided that it should be directly under higher-level sponsorship. New personnel and new committees moved in on it. And again came the soft touches. Instead of meeting in a hotel in the city, the institute was scheduled for a seminary. Outside "irritants" were excluded. The speakers and leaders were all authentic churchmen. And everything became very friendly.

We certainly do not want to leave this subject with the reader having the impression that there is nothing good to say about church councils. Much is written about the fine work they do—by writers engaged to do just that. Our concern here is not so much with what they do as it is with what they do *not* do.

As we indicated earlier in this chapter, most, but not all, interdenominational work takes place in councils. Some of the more dynamic efforts to develop pro-

grams and activities which lead to cooperative Protestant witness have occurred outside council channels. It is my impression, for example, that the inner city Protestant parishes of New York, Cleveland, and Chicago were not generated by council leadership (although there may have been an overlapping of personnel). And recently there has been an Urban Training Center established in Chicago which was not brought into being by councils of the denominations, although they are participating in it. Perhaps developments like these are cases where Protestant ecumenical activity is furthest along.

In this time of great flux and confusion, it could well happen that church councils at all levels will be forced to realize that their whole structure is challenged, and that the tactic of adjusting a little here and a little there is like spending all one's time worrying about whether to take the George Washington Bridge or the Holland Tunnel as one begins one's journey from New York to Los Angeles.

To pinpoint the question: does all this have a special implication for Protestant participation in the Ecumenical Era? I would suggest that it has. In the American interdenominational scene, the instrument of the council has *not* been the cutting edge of concepts and encounters. Councils simply have not brought people together. It would not be surprising if it were shown that there are churchmen devoting a considerable amount of time and effort at the council

level slowing up council work by protesting changes which, if they were to take place in their own denominations, could drastically affect their positions and status. Instinctively they tend to carry back to their denominations a conservatism to slow down the process of change.

If these observations even approximate the truth, they pose a most difficult task for the Protestant churches in this country. If there really is an "ethic" that is essentially Protestant in nature, and if this ethic is not essentially conservative to the extent that it keeps the bodies comprising the "Protestant" family from working together at a council level, it follows that this ethic must be both expressed and made manifest as incorporating an element of change if there is to be any meaningful ecumenical conversation. If I be allowed here one contention, it would be this: that the new concept of metropolitan responsibility will, as it grows, create a revolution in the public sector, and that national councils, as well as state councils and local federations, must realize that they are not yet exercising the leadership which they should—and which we hope they can. But if the denominations have been unwilling to make these councils responsible agents for common witness in "lesser" areas, is it reasonable to expect that they will do so in this new, and perhaps greater, challenge?

Toward Dynamic Adjustment

14

Thus far we have talked about the autonomous parish and introverted vision; the difference between responding to that which has changed, on the one hand, and participating in change-making, on the other. We have discussed the need to meet people where they are psychologically and intellectually rather than physically; the problems of administration within institutions; the edifice complex; and interdenominationalism. And we have examined all these themes against the background of the metropolis and the metropolite.

If the reader has followed our argument, interpreting for himself the posture of the church in society, there is some likelihood that he will conclude, as I do, that the church is not as active in society as it needs to be. Yet not all people accept the premise that the church has any business being involved in the world. For them the points made here will have little meaning.

But for those who do accept this premise and see it as basic that the church be involved, we can agree that there is a common goal, a long-range objective—to bring the church into a viable conjunction with the world, to make of it a totally relevant witness.

There are many people who stand at the edge of agreement with these views, but are undecided about what steps can be taken to implement them. Some say that the present resources of the church cannot be moved into this new plane. They say that we must build new structures with new people; that the old will continue to wither away and eventually dry up. Others say that this is too radical a change, the equivalent of throwing out the "baby" with the bath water. They say that the problem is not so much the structure per se as it is what we do with it.

I tend toward this latter view. We generalize that the "typical" parish is not relevant; but some parishes are exquisitely in tune with the times. We agonize over the pastor who reads only the obituaries; but we can rejoice over others who have grasped leadership roles and confronted their communities with vital ministries.

As we consider the possibilities of dynamic adjustment, however, we must bear in mind that adjustment can be of different kinds. There is the kind that aims simply to preserve the status quo; and there is another, more dynamic type, that seeks to meet the changes in a situation. It should be quite clear that we are talking about the latter, and that when we speak of

"adjustment" we are not talking about doing more of the same.

The traditional concept of autonomy is certainly one which must undergo dynamic adjustment. Central to this whole book is the idea that "community" as a spatial term refers to the area approximating the metropolis—the area of our interdependencies. But the political fact is that this metropolitan community is today artificially subdivided as a result of our agrarian heritage. The old assumption, however, that limiting one's scope or bounds increases one's capacity to act responsibly no longer pertains.

The predictable result of these artificial divisions is seen in the fast-emerging system of two cultures. This holds vast implications about people's attitudes concerning their relationships and responsibilities to one another. These matters are critical to the witnessing Christian community and always have been. In other words, the *creation* of community becomes the contemporary challenge to the Christian world. But if the church itself continues to operate as though each local preaching station is a kingdom unto itself, it is in no position to "witness" to the factual situation described.

I am not certain that any artificial device can be imposed to induce a basic change in the locally autonomous structure of the church. But it could be proposed that the financial pledges from individual members of a church be made and paid *directly* to the

regional body of the denomination. For Episcopalians this would be to the diocese; for Presbyterians, to the presbytery; for Methodists, to the district; for Lutherans, to the synod. This is not simply a random suggestion. It is a recurring theme at many meetings of church leaders, although mention of it is usually accompanied by a wry grin.

What would be the impact of such a plan? Since decisions are most readily made where there is money to back them, it should not be difficult to envision a more effective regional commission, responsible for deploying clergy and other professional church workers. If the regional board should determine from its overview of missionary needs in the whole metropolis that there is particular need for a team of people to work in a certain area, it could make the decision and implement it directly.

This kind of operation would run directly counter to the one we are used to. Today, for example, Shaker Heights residents may reject responsibility for Cleveland; or the people of Greenwich may want nothing to do with New York City; or Lexington, Massachusetts, may feel removed and remote from Boston's Roxbury. Yet all minds do not rest easily with this detachment. There is a disquiet undercurrent—a feeling that perhaps this is not the way things should be. My own thought is that if we were to take the bold step and confront people with the idea of one basic regional church spanning the metropolis yet operating through

local stations, we would at least have provided the occasion for a clearer confrontation. Thus far this confrontation has not taken place. It has simply been assumed that such a step would be completely rejected, and this may not be accurate. If we are not awake to the possibilities of public awareness, how can we expect the public to be aware of what we are trying to do? The social mirror reflects both society and ourselves as Christians in society, as necessarily interdependent. Being aware of each other can begin simply by reading newspapers more carefully. We must be constantly asking the meaning of the news items and feature articles on social questions (which appear even in the most conservative journals) for the witness of the church. In fact, there may be things which must be done before we can even go this far. But obviously, the church must go even farther.

It seems clear that the church has a role in revealing what is happening in society. It is not, for example, my impression that it was within the church that the first alarm was sounded on racial injustice. When the Rev. Eugene Carson Blake spoke at the march on Washington in the summer of 1963, the theme of his address was "Lately, we come!" And late, indeed, it was. I suppose the church has provided insight into the problems of the American Indian and the migrant laborer, but the church is not doing much to make these problems a part of the general concern of the American public. Currently there is active concern

over poverty in Appalachia, about which the church has been knowledgeable for years. One wonders why it has taken so long for it to become a public question and concern.

What this suggests, in general, is that the church has a role and a responsibility to bring people to a sensitive awareness of their broader responsibilities. There is the need to point out continually that public questions are not dealt with only in the market place of private interests. The church must labor to provide the forums for the discussion of problems and for the articulation of the values that underlie their resolution. The church must work to create and maintain an openness of mind to the facts of the metropolitan community and must, unceasingly, teach that the clock cannot be turned back to another age.

None of this implies that the church must itself become a part of the power structure. The power of the church is not its institutional hierarchy; it is the power of the Christian witness made manifest in the lives of people who profess the faith. What we are saying here is nothing more, nothing less, than that it is a continuing function of the church to learn the meaning of witness in contemporary society and to pray for the strength to fulfill that mission.

For this reason, and all others explicit or implicit in this book, I am not in the least convinced that it is necessary, or even desirable, to rid ourselves of the resources we presently possess. We have men, good

men. We have physical resources distributed everywhere. The challenge before us is to make full and comprehensive use of them.

This may require taking risks. But there is nothing new in this to the Christian community. Risk-taking has been a part of its heritage. I think there is today a degree of readiness for certain risks that church leadership, in general, is too slow to recognize and accept. Preoccupation with the minutiae of institutional life has pushed adjustment to change into the background. Our concern, then, must be that this church founded by Jesus Christ for the service of witness and commitment does not fall short of the mark.

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